

Jim Dowson talks  
to HOPE not hate  
HOME NEWS p12



Where now for  
HOPE not hate?  
COMMENT p30



Norway three  
years after Breivik  
INTERNATIONAL p41



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September-October 2014  
Issue no. 15 Price £3.50



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# HOPE not hate

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HOPE not hate is a bi-monthly publication providing information on hate groups and community initiatives to combat them.

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## Countering hate with HOPE

AS HOPE not hate celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, we have spent the summer thinking about the next ten years. We have been assisted by the views of our supporters, over 1,300 of whom responded to a survey we conducted in July.

We were set up as a response to the BNP and being *against* something defined us but now we want to organise around what we are *for*. We want more HOPE and less hate.

This approach will cover all areas of our work. Even a campaign to counter UKIP, who our supporters clearly recognise as a cause for concern, should focus less on attacking them but more about counterposing its vision of our country to the one we want.

This month sees the launch of our TOGETHER campaign which seeks to peacefully and positively unite communities through dialogue and mutual interest in a way we were unable to do whilst taking on the BNP.

HOPE not hate has achieved a lot in its first 10 years but I'm even more excited about the next 10. I hope you will be part of this journey.

### THE LONGEST HATRED

The conflict in Gaza saw a massive spike in antisemitism across Europe, as Jewish communities were targeted and blamed for the actions of Israel. In July alone, the Community Security Trust recorded a 400% increase in antisemitic incidents across the UK from the same period last year. What was worse though, was the seeming indifference from some on the left. This is totally unacceptable. Antisemitism is a form of racism just

like any other and needs to be taken seriously and confronted. Whatever one's view on the Gaza conflict, blaming Jewish people in the UK is totally wrong.

### THE NEW ANTI-FASCISM

The murderous actions of ISIS in Syria and Iraq should remind us of the threat posed by Islamist extremism and the changing focus of anti-fascism today. If the 20<sup>th</sup> century was defined by authoritarian nationalism, the threat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century looks likely to come from religious extremism.

The ideology behind ISIS is as awful, intolerant and vicious as fascism and we must confront it with the same vigour and determination. Just as the threats change so, too, must anti-fascism and we must now challenge intolerance, inequality and discrimination in all quarters we find it.

### A NEW ENGLAND?

As this magazine goes to press, the people of Scotland are preparing to vote on whether they want to go independent. Whatever the outcome, things will never be the same again. An independent Scotland will have a massive impact on the psyche of the English and probably exacerbate the feeling of loss some feel. But even if the Scots decide to stay within the UK, the new powers to set their own income tax levels and reconfigure welfare will fundamentally change the relationship with Westminster and increase calls for an English parliament and regional government.

Either way, there is a real need for a new, positive and inclusive English identity to emerge.

## INSIDE



### INVESTIGATION: JIM DOWSON WHY HE WALKED OUT ON BRITAIN FIRST



PAGE 20

### COMMENT: VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING LET DOWN



### INTERNATIONAL: GOLDEN DAWN IN JAIL, ON TRIAL AND IN THE EU

#### HOPE not hate challenges the politics of hate and organised intolerance within society.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. Since it was founded in 2004, HOPE not hate has over 165,000 online supporters and over 95,000 followers on Facebook.

We are not aligned to any political party and will work with everyone wherever possible.

HOPE not hate comprises HOPE not hate Ltd and our charitable wing, HOPE not hate Educational Ltd.

[www.hopenothate.org.uk](http://www.hopenothate.org.uk)

#### 6 Home News

Tory MP defects to UKIP

#### 8 International News

German Freies Netz Süd banned

#### 11 Guest Column

Kalsoom Bashir on sexual abuse

#### 12 Waving goodbye to the far-right

Jim Dowson explains why he is turning his back on Britain's far right

#### 15 Shut down the peddler of hate

A call to investigate the financial affairs of Britain First and Paul Golding

#### 16 The war veteran who wasn't

The Armed Forces officer who was not quite the person Britain First pretended

#### 18 Griffins annus horribilis

A year of frustration for Nick Griffin

#### 20 Shining a light on abuse

How vulnerable young people are being abused and then let down by the system

#### 22 The nazi bus driver

A nazi, with a criminal conviction, is a London bus driver and Unite member

#### 23 No Right Turn

Some politicians will urge their parties to move to the right

#### 26 Giving a voice to the voiceless

Changes to the way people register to vote are an act of disenfranchisement

#### 30 In search of HOPE

Reflecting on 10 years of HOPE not hate

#### 34 Red Lines: antisemitism

What we say *is* important

#### 36 Purple Rain

UKIP links up with European extremists

#### 38 HOPE camp

Our first HOPE camp, a six-day organising course in Thurrock

#### 40 Country in Focus special

Festering still, the hatred that killed ... three years on

#### 42 International

Trials and tribulations for Spanish nazis

#### 46 Last Word

My brother, the terrorist

## CONTRIBUTORS



**KALSOOM BASHIR**

In the Guest Column, Kalsoom Bashir, co-Director of Inspire, argues that Muslim communities need to do more to address child sexual abuse.



**ROBB LEECH**

In the Last Word, filmmaker Robb Leech reflects on the reasons his step-brother ended up in jail for plotting a terrorist act.



**TOR BACH**

Three years on, Norwegian correspondent Tor Bach explores how the hatred behind Anders Breivik's murderous spree still lingers on.



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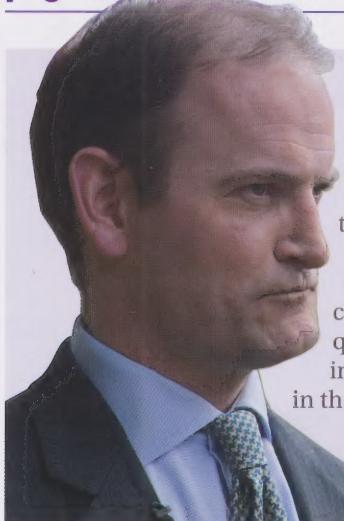
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## Tory MP defects to UKIP

CLACTON MP Douglas Carswell has defected from the Conservative party to UKIP.

The Eurosceptic MP announced his defection at a hastily arranged press conference in August, revealing he had quit as the MP for the seaside town and intended to stand under the UKIP banner in the subsequent by-election.

Shortly after his defection, an opinion poll carried out by Survation revealed that UKIP and Carswell held a 44-point

lead over the Conservatives in second place.

If he wins the support of voters he will be the first elected UKIP MP in the Commons.

UKIP also claims it has been courting a number of other MPs from both the Conservatives and Labour, saying others will also defect shortly.

Not everyone in Clacton is happy about Carswell's defection, however. Roger Lord, UKIP's existing general election candidate, said he had no intention of standing aside, labelling Douglas Carswell as arrogant, a gutless coward and an idiot.



### Janice Atkinson MEP: "arrogant racist"

A UKIP MEP has been accused of being an arrogant racist by one of her fellow UKIP members.

The accusation, made by Ramsgate UKIP member Vincent Munday, followed Janice Atkinson's controversial comments referring to his Thai wife, as a "Ting Tong" in an interview recorded by the BBC.

UKIP claimed that Atkinson had offered the couple a full apology, with UKIP leader Nigel Farage also making a hastily arranged personal visit to the Mundays.

However, it has become clear that the Ramsgate couple are still far from impressed with the behaviour of Janice Atkinson, with Vincent Munday posting on social media:

*"Her written apology which was obviously written by a press team meant nothing, her silence since the incident has been deafening, she has done nothing to put the matter to bed."*

*"Once again, in my opinion, Janice Atkinson has shown her true colours, I think she has her own interests at heart; she is an arrogant racist who has been caught out and I firmly believe deserves to be ejected from the party because it's very unlikely her arrogance would allow her to leave of her own volition."*

## Conservative MP defends Rivers Of Blood speech

A CONSERVATIVE MP has claimed that Enoch Powell's controversial 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech was correct to warn against immigration to the UK.

Sir Gerald Howarth, MP for Aldershot, wrote in a letter to one of his constituents: "Clearly, the arrival of so many people of a non-Christian faith has presented a challenge as so many of us, including the late Enoch Powell, warned decades ago."

Howarth, who was involved with the ultra-right Monday Club and is a member of the Freedom Association,

continued: "Recent events have illustrated that some of these new arrivals have a very different ethos from traditional Christian schools and we were right to intervene to prevent them from teaching divisive ideology to children born here."

Howarth said that it is time for England to "fight back" adding: "If you don't like it, go live somewhere else." "For 40 years we have been subjected to a left-wing political correctness which has stopped the British people from expressing perfectly legitimate and reasonable views."

## Racist vandals desecrate Muslim graves

A GROUP of racist vandals desecrated Muslim graves in an Oldham cemetery in August.

The vandals uprooted headstones, destroyed flowers and kicked over memorials at Chadderton Cemetery in what Greater Manchester Police called a 'heinous and senseless' crime

Sgt Jon Martin said: "The exact motive for this heinous and senseless vandalism is unclear, but given that only the Muslim section of the

cemetery was targeted it has to be treated as being racially motivated.

That makes this vandalism even more sickening, as the culprits have singled out the resting places of those who have lost their lives purely because of their religion.

This is not just wanton racism but the deliberate, calculating and cruel act of desecrating the memories of Muslims who are buried at the cemetery."



## Street named after town's first Sikh settler

THE FAMILY of the first Sikh to live in a Berkshire town have expressed their delight on hearing that a street will be named after him in recognition of the family's work in the local community.

Sant Kharak Singh Bhamra, who died in 2004, moved to Maidenhead in the 1960s and was later joined by his wife and four children. The couple dedicated their lives to helping people by linking up with a number of charities and working with the poor.

The family expressed their joy after being informed that local councillors had included Bhamra in the name of a new street.

Their son, Palwinder Singh, said: "We've had a lot of support from councillors and from the mayor."

"The naming of the road will be an inspiration to our family for generations to come, encouraging us to carry on my parents' legacy of always helping and giving to the community."

Bhamra Gardens will be the name of the street when a new housing estate is completed in the town.



## Southampton neo-Nazi accused of planning cyanide attacks

A NAZI from the Southampton area, accused of a plot to kill non-whites with cyanide, has been told he will face trial in December.

Mark Colborne is charged with engaging in conduct in preparation of terrorist acts contrary to section 5(1) of the Terrorism Act 2006.

Colborne appeared via video link at the Old Bailey from Belmarsh prison where he is being kept on remand.

Mr Justice Sweeney set the date of 8 December for a trial lasting one to two weeks.

Colborne was arrested in June when counter-terrorism police searched his home in Sholing, Southampton. He was later charged with the terror offence on 1 July.

The defendant was remanded in custody until his next court appearance on 27 October for a plea and case management hearing.

## Islamic extremists hand out pro-ISIS leaflets in London

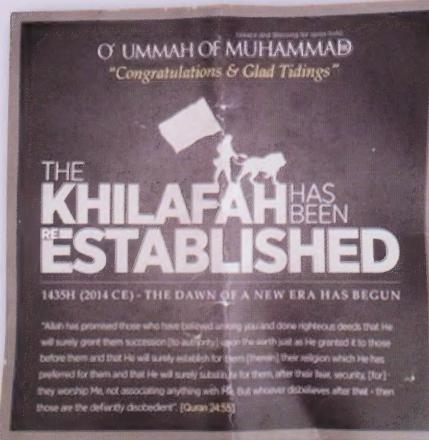
AN INVESTIGATION by the Metropolitan Police has been launched after a group of Islamic extremists handed out leaflets on Oxford Street hoping to recruit British Muslims to join up with ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

The leaflets claimed that it is the responsibility of Muslims in the UK to pledge allegiance to the "Khaleef", otherwise known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the terror group ISIS.

The men, all thought to be from the Luton area, are supporters of the extremist cleric Anjem Choudary.

The police confirmed that they were checking the literature to establish if any anti-terror laws have been broken.

People reacted with anger to the



group. Student, Asmaa Al-Kufaishi, revealed how she was verbally abused by the men after she challenged them over the leaflets.

Posting on Twitter she wrote "This group are promoting ISIS on Oxford Street. Racially abused us when we spoke out. They don't know Islam."

## Young Muslims aid church food bank



MEMBERS OF A LEEDS mosque collected donations of food during Ramadan to help feed the poor in the Yorkshire city.

Food collected during the 'Ramadan Harvest' at the Baab-Ul-Ilm Centre was donated to the Moortown Methodist Church food bank at the end of July.

The project was organised by members of the Youth Network at the mosque. Youth leader Zaheda Mehrali said: "For Muslims, besides this being the month of fasting there is a higher goal of community development which

takes place by extending the message of love, brotherhood and unity within the community. We've recently set up the network to try to engage youths in being more proactive with contributing to society - and they have organised this."

"We just want to raise awareness that we are doing our bit and really do want to change the image that Muslims have at the moment."

"It's been going well so far - a lot of people from the community have been coming down and dropping off bits. It's been quite successful."

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- Comment: No right turn page 23



### GERMANY | Nazi Freies Netz Süd banned

FROM MICHAEL KLEIN FOR ANTIFA-NET IN BERLIN

THE NAZI FREIES Netz Süd (FNS) group was outlawed in Bavaria by the region's interior minister on 23 July. Founded in 2009, the FNS was an umbrella organisation for about twenty local groups.

The ban followed police raids on more than seventy private homes and on leading members of a group that was able to mobilise as many as three hundred activists at short notice. The ban was justified by the fact that the FNS was a successor of the Fränkische Aktionsfront – banned in 2004 – and was aggressive and anti-democratic. A policy document found in the raid was textually close to the 25-point programme of Hitler's Nazi Party.

The FNS ran premises in the tiny Bavarian village of Oberprex where nazis from all over Germany and the Czech Republic met regularly. This meeting place has now closed as has the mail order business, "Final Resistance", run by leading FNS figures, Tony Gentsch and Matthias Fischer. The ban had looked likely for over two years, giving the nazis bags of time to prepare for it. A number have now joined a nazi outfit called "The Third Way" with branches across southern Germany.



### FRANCE | Bishop Williamson launches new Sedevacantist union in France

FROM JEAN-YVES CAMUS IN PARIS

ON 15 JULY, British "Bishop" and Holocaust denier Richard Williamson was at the Dominican abbey of Avrillé in western France, a stronghold of the Lefebvrist Fraternité Sacerdotale Saint-Pie X (FSSPX) since the 1980s. Williamson was there to pay tribute to Marcel Lefebvre, the late leader of the Catholic fundamentalist movement that founded the FSSPX, by establishing the Union sacerdotale Marcel Lefebvre, a splinter group for priests within the FSSPX who oppose reintegration into the Roman Catholic Church.

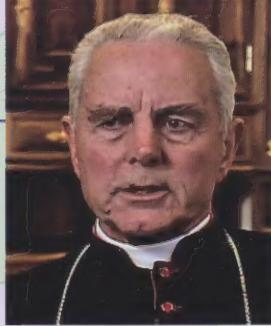
In June 2013, 21 priests belonging to FSSPX, under Williamson's guidance, signed an "open letter" to its head, Bishop Bernard Fellay, announcing their resignation. The Union seems to be a further step in fundamentalist dissidence but it is only one of many small groups holding the Sedevacantist belief that all Popes after the Second Vatican Council are heretics. What is significant is its use of the (in)famous name of Lefebvre and the support it gets from the weekly magazine *Rivarol*, a French extreme right publication that has appeared since 1951.

Williamson's latest creation will have to compete with groups sharing the same ideology: the Italy-based Institute Mater Bonii Consilii, undoubtedly the predominant one; plus the US-based Society of St. Pius V under the guidance of "Bishop" Anthony Cekada and several priests who, having left FSSPX, now run an unaffiliated congregation of their own.



Italian populist Beppe Grillo  
Photo: Niccolò Caranti

Holocaust denier  
Richard Williamson



### BELGIUM | Looking for a replacement

BY WIM HAELESTERMAN FOR AFF-VERZET/RÉSISTANCES IN BRUSSELS

FOLLOWING ITS catastrophic performance in May's federal elections when it saw its vote slip to a paltry 3.67%, the far right Vlaams Belang (VB) remains in difficulties, old rivalries, discontent and feuds continuing to dominate the once successful party.

The internal crisis that surfaced in full force during the election campaign persists, but MEP Gerolf Annemans, who announced his resignation from the party's leadership the day after the election, is still in charge. The VB is hoping to find

a new chairman – preferably with a new and attractive face – before the end of the year.

So far no suitable candidate has come forward or is seen as a viable alternative for Annemans and whoever succeeds him faces a mission that looks extremely difficult, if not impossible. The main internal problem, according to many observers, is the ongoing domination of the VB by the Antwerp branch, top party celebrity Philip Dewinter and the faction that stands behind him.

**SWEDEN | Grillo blasted**

FROM DANIEL VERGARA FOR EXPO IN STOCKHOLM

THE COUNCIL of Jewish Communities (CJC) in Sweden has lambasted the far right Sweden Democrats' (SD) cooperation with Italian populist Beppe Grillo's party, The Five Star Movement, in the European Parliament and in the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) group.

Grillo has expressed antisemitic claims that Jews control the world, finance and the media and made other outrageous comments. For example, in 2006, he defended Hollywood actor Mel Gibson when he alleged that Jews are responsible for all the world's wars. In April 2014, Grillo published a retouched photo mocking the infamous sign – which

reads *Arbeit macht frei* – above the gates of Auschwitz and changed the words of Primo Levi's famous poem about the Holocaust. When Jewish communities in Italy criticised Grillo, he responded with more antisemitism, declaring "When you touch the powerful, these things surface, these lobbies .... Who is behind the banks, behind finance?"

The SD have said they will maintain cooperation with Grillo, arguing that UKIP, which heads the EFDD group, has assured them that there is no antisemitism in Grillo's party. However, the CJC disagrees. "If you are in a group with this party, you agree with it," said CJC chair Lena Posner-Körösi.

**NETHERLANDS | Freedom Party returns to the front**

BY JEROEN BOSCH FOR ALERT! IN AMSTERDAM

THE FREEDOM PARTY (PVV) is blowing its anti-Islam horn again, after a few uncomfortable moments surrounding the Malaysian Airlines flight disaster on 17 July and resulting anti-Russian sentiments in the Netherlands.

Before the crash, PVV-leader Geert Wilders toned down his criticism of the politics of Vladimir Putin so as not to irritate his ally Marine Le Pen. Earlier this year, the PVV in the European Parliament was even invited by a pro-Russian NGO in Moscow to monitor the Crimean referendum, but avoided involvement.

The Gaza conflict and antisemitic incidents in the Netherlands have enabled the PVV to return to its speciality: Islam-bashing. Wilders,

who champions comparing Hitler or Nazism with Islam, wants people who, during demonstrations against Israeli actions in Gaza, held placards with Star of David = Swastika, to be jailed, stripped of Dutch nationality (if they held dual nationality) and to be deported from the Netherlands.

Raging, he even branded a statement by Jewish organisations and the Dutch government about growing concern with antisemitism as "crap". According to Wilders, the Dutch government and Jewish organisations fail to see the "elephant in the room". A full-page appeal against anti-Jewish hatred by the pro-Israeli lobby group, CIDI, in the country's biggest newspaper left out Wilders' signature because of his criticism of the earlier statement.

**AUSTRIA | Anti-fascists' personal details handed to nazis**

FROM MARTIN JORDAN IN VIENNA

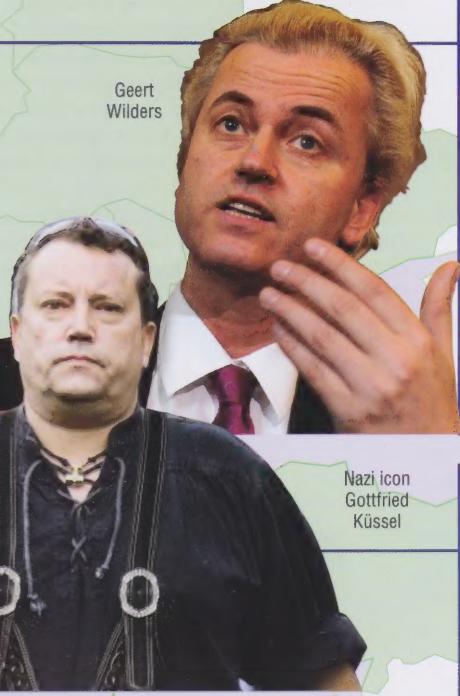
THE RE-LAUNCHED nazi website alpen-donau.info (ADI) has republished a legal document with the names, telephone numbers, e-mail and home addresses of informants who had notified the law office dealing with "(Re-)engagement in National Socialist activities" about the site's revival. The ADI's operators also claim to have a complete list of "denunciators", evidently happy to share it with people intent on sending "fan mail" to them

ADI was shut down in 2011 after the arrest of the site's controllers – including nazi icon Gottfried Küssel – and their being sentenced to long jail terms. The website's re-launch, earlier this year, was followed by calls for a renewed probe into the initiative.

The law office, run by the Federal

Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (BVT), duly forwarded information it had gathered to the public prosecutor who began preliminary proceedings against ADI's new main operator, the convicted nazi thug Richard Pfingstl.

With staggering incompetence, the public prosecutor then included personal information in the official case record without any consideration of data protection. As parties to the case, Pfingstl and his lawyer had the right to access this information and also make copies of it. The scandal widened to include the Ministry of Defence when ADI went on to publish part of a confidential document about Pfingstl that the BVT had apparently received from military counter-intelligence.



Barbara Pas and Tom Van Grieken

Insiders tout the names of Barbara Pas, 33, and a federal MP since 2007, and Tom Van Grieken, 27, and regional MP elected in May, quite often. There are, however, serious doubts about their ability to lead (and reshape) the party. Neither has so far made any ambitions known to the public.



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- Country in Focus: Norway page 40



## ARGENTINA | Nazis go legal

SOURCE: JTA

AN ULTRANATIONALIST organization led by convicted nazi Alejandro Biondini has won legal approval as a registered political party. Buenos Aires Judge Ariel Lijo granted the approval for Bandera Vecinal (Local Flag) in June. The party, expected to stand in the 2015 presidential elections, claims to have signed up the required 4,000 members.

The Argentinian Jewish organisation Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) said Biondini "has publicly and repeatedly supported the figure of Adolf Hitler and Nazism. DAIA reiterates its position to not legitimize as a political party those who justify hatred and encouraging violence against the Jewish community and others in our country."

In 1988, Biondini led chants of "Death to traitors, cowards and Jews" at an extreme-right gathering in Buenos Aires. Three years later, a judge quashed his group's request to register as the Workers' Nationalist Socialist Party and use the swastika as its symbol. In the 2011 elections, Biondini's Social Alternative Party garnered just 0.19 per cent of the vote. Argentina's Supreme Court banned his previous party, New Triumph, in 2009.



## USA | Nativists organise protests against child refugees

ERIC O'NEILL REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON DC

THE EXTREMIST far right nativist movement is organizing protests around the country in response to the children seeking refuge in the U.S. from gang and drug cartel violence in Central America.

Protests have taken place in small towns like Murrieta (California), Vassar (Michigan), and Oracle (Arizona), where

## HUNGARY | Racist conference

ISTVÁN TÓTH REPORTS

THE FAR RIGHT National Policy Institute (NPI) will hold a congress under the title of "The Future of Europe – Perspectives on Geopolitics, Identity, and Nationalism" in Budapest from 3 to 5 October. The gathering will enjoy the participation of the Hungarian fascist Jobbik party. The NPI's website boasts "this will be an exceptional opportunity ... for traditionalists and identitarians from around the world to build fellowship".

Speakers include Márton Gyöngyösi, the rabidly antisemitic Jobbik MP, who proposed a public list of Jewish MPs. Another speaker is Alexander Dugin, the apostle of "Eurasian" supremacy, a virulent enemy of liberalism and, allegedly, the ideologue of Russian president Putin. Dugin's mad cocktail of ideas consists of hysterical anti-liberalism, Great Russian nationalism, nazi *Lebensraum* theory and a belief in the West's irreversible decline. The ultimate aim of his International Eurasian Movement is a Russian-led empire. The American Jared Taylor, a creator of the NPI and a hard-bitten racist, will also take the floor.

The centre-left Egyutt-PM (Together-Dialogue for Hungary) party has demanded the conference's cancellation, blasting it as "a disgrace to Hungary". Egyutt-PM also says Gyöngyösi, who is vice-chairman of the Hungarian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, should be sacked.



long-time anti-immigrant activists have whipped up opposition to the relocation of refugees. At these initial demonstrations, activists engaged in threatening behaviour and brandished signs with bigoted slogans. In Murrieta, the racists blocked a bus carrying refugees from entering a regional border patrol facility. In Vassar, protesters openly waved firearms, and in Oracle, armed militia members attended, stopping a busload of summer campers in the process.

Following these stunts, nativist and

## SERBIA | Fascist training for youth

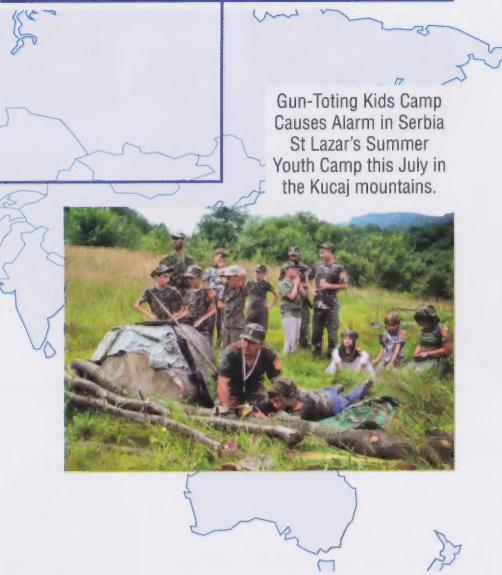
FROM DAŠKO MILINOVIC IN NOVI SAD

THE SERBIAN Orthodox Church, one of the most powerful right-wing institutions in the Balkans, has an offshoot in the so-called Serbian True Orthodox Church (STOC), a sect influenced by Second World War-era Serbian fascist movements.

This summer, STOC organised a children's summer camp, parents being invited to send their children for a fortnight of "physical and spiritual training and development in the healthy, untouched wilderness of Serbian forests and mountains".

Photos and videos later revealed the true nature of the camp where the children were subjected to a harsh routine of prayer, indoctrination (a mixture of highly retrograde Orthodoxy and classical fascism) and also to military training with target practice and drill. The official Serbian Orthodox Church and anti-fascists, each for their own separate reasons, called for an investigation and closure of the camp.

STOC is led by Nemanja Stankovic, a former nazi skinhead, who became a monk in a zealot Greek monastery and who now calls himself *Episkep* (bishop) Akakije. The sect stands for values of so-called "orthodox nationalism" – a phrase coined by the WWII ideologists of Serbian fascism, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic and Dimitrije Ljotic – and views the official church as a treacherous, ecumenical and "Jewish-owned".



far right groups organised nationwide protest days on 18 and 19 July. While events took place in over 100 locations, most attracted single digit crowds. White nationalists and nazis took part in Oregon, Pennsylvania and Arizona.

Many placards displayed at the nationwide events depicted child refugees as "disease carriers", a claim that is continually touted by both the nativist movement and the right-wing media, stoking public fears and anxieties around these children. Further nationwide protests are scheduled for late October.

## Guest column...

# Putting our house in order

**Kalsoom Bashir**

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS ago, I reported a Muslim Imam for sexually abusing his female pupils. At the tender age of 13, I had an unshakeable conviction that reporting the abuse and the betrayal in the teacher-pupil relationship, to the chair of the committee of the religious institution I attended would be taken seriously. How wrong I was.

The following day, expecting to see police officers waiting to take statements from the victims, classes continued as normal. I still remember the incredulous look I gave the teacher and the slight smile on his face as he observed me and looked away. Fearing I would confront him, I was taken outside and told to remain silent and that if word got out and Muslims were given a bad name it would be my fault.

This man's abuse of young girls remained unchallenged because he was allowed to hide behind the anti-racism card.

Fast forward now to the present and the shocking revelations of the Rotherham child sex abuse have lifted the lid on the community politics that I had gained an insight into as a 13-year-old child. Very little has changed and the cultural attitudes in pockets of certain Pakistani communities then have now become reinforced with the added dimension of a sexist and corrupt version of Islam.

The religious rhetoric often pushed likens uncovered women to pieces of meat or uncovered lollipops that attract flies. The words of one of the victims that confided in me still haunt me: 'while he touched me he (the imam) asked if any of my white school friends wanted to have sex because he wanted it.'

Writing this I am aware that I will be labelled as 'a native'



informant' an 'uncle Tom', and 'house Muslim' by those who would have women silenced and who care little about sexism. For decades self-proclaimed community leaders claimed to speak on women's behalf to statutory agencies without ever bothering to consult the women themselves.

I have no experience of the culture that existed in the BBC that allowed a fertile breeding ground for the likes of Saville, Hall and Harris to operate. I have no insight into the culture of the Catholic Church that did not heed accusations of abuse within. I do, however, recognise that the common factor that exists in all these cases is a culture of impunity and a culture of sexism.

As a Pakistani woman, I am painfully aware of this culture within certain sections of this community that has allowed fertile breeding ground for these monsters to operate. The

Rotherham case and others like it have highlighted that this sexism manifests itself in different forms across wider society. These children were groomed by Pakistani men but were not believed by the very agencies set up to protect them simply because it was believed these girls wanted sex and who made themselves available.

What others and I have found overwhelmingly insulting is that the voice of victims was ignored because of cultural sensitivities. Just as years ago my voice and the voices of other Muslim girls were silenced to protect abusers who hid behind the Islam card, white victims were ignored as people didn't want "to rock the multicultural boat" as former Rotherham MP Denis MacShane admitted.

Let's be clear: race, culture or religion cannot be used to condone or justify silence on this issue. We cannot allow such reasons to justify any form of abuse, exploitation or violence on some of the most vulnerable members of our society: children. I hope Pakistani communities are waking up to the criminals in their midst and are realising that this is a problem that needs to be tackled head on by the community. Nor can agencies turn a blind eye. Together, we must do all we can to create a zero tolerance attitude against any form of abuse and violence against children. Together we must give hope to these young victims who, like I did, felt hopeless and helpless. We will not ignore their cries of help again as there can never be any good reason to do so.

■ **KALSOOM DASHIR** is co-director of Inspire  
[www.wewillinspire.com](http://www.wewillinspire.com)



# Waving goodbye to the t

Last month Jim Dowson walked out on Britain First. In an exclusive interview with *Matthew Collins* and *Nick Lowles*, he explains why he is turning his back on Britain's far right

We're driving through the County Down countryside past slim, stone cottages. The sun is out and we're only twenty minutes from the hustle and bustle of Northern Ireland's capital, Belfast. What should be a pleasant drive in the countryside is clouded by trepidation and a nervous navigation through country lanes. Eventually our satnav coughs to life and we have arrived at a small country pub covered in Union Jack bunting.

There is no flag dispute here. This is the heart of rural, Protestant Northern Ireland. My colleague and I should have

nothing to fear, we are both, after all, bespoke English gentlemen. But once inside our accents sound flat and loud and seem to carry far too far across the panelled bar where stony red faces are glued to the news on television. Above the television, a portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II hangs beguilingly.

That we got this far is an accomplishment. We'd been diverted off the Shankill Road as our host had something of an apparition that impending death awaited either him or us the further up the road we drove. It's a reoccurring theme. Not long before

that we also diverted off another busy road – this time bedecked with the Irish tricolour, as sitting in the traffic there with him would be most definitely an invitation to an early grave. So we ended up heading for the relative safety of the hills.

In the pub we're ushered briskly into a back room. Our host by the way, is Jim Dowson.

Yes, it's *that* Jim Dowson: the hardline Ulster Loyalist who built up the British National Party (BNP) and then knocked it down amid kidnappings, alleged gun-toting, death threats and cars being run



# far-right

off the road. He then founded Britain First (BF) as some kind of Christian Militia preparing for Armageddon.

Dowson is delighted we're here. It's not lost on him that on the day we meet, thousands of Iraqi Christians have fled to the mountains, being chased by murderous Jihadists hell-bent on beheading them or burying them alive. "This," opens Dowson, "is our own doing. The work of liberal Marxist appeasement of Islamic fundamentalism." He crashes down his glass on the small wooden table behind which he has taken position. Other than that, he's happy to see us. Of course, he wears a flat cap and the standard garb of a man about to go shooting animals in the fields behind us. "You and I have met before," he says leaning across the table

# What now for Britain First?

**Paul Golding looked unstable. Not just unsteady on his feet lecturing his followers down a video camera, he genuinely looked unsettled and confused. It was a warm Sunday afternoon in July. Jim Dowson had just quit Britain First, the "militia" they'd formed together back in 2011. Golding promised no more mosque invasions, the sole reason he believed his mentor and sugar daddy was pulling out of the controversial group.**

A loving political obituary appeared on Britain First's website, blaming HOPE not hate for Dowson's decision to "retire" from "politics". Praise was lavished on Dowson by hundreds of Britain First supporters. The "liberal left" had taken its toll on their visionary founder.

And then the *Daily Mirror* went to print. Whilst Golding had been leering down the camera, Dowson had been telling the newspaper that he was pulling all funding from the group too. Whilst Golding eulogised over his beloved leader, Dowson was switching off Britain First's telephone lines.

If now should be the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party, do not expect Paul Golding to lead Britain First through these difficulties. Golding may have been proclaimed leader, but Jim Dowson tied every lace Golding had, restraining him when necessary and dotting the I's and crossing the T's on everything Golding wrote or said.

Golding is just not stable. The BNP even warned Dowson when the two ran off together in 2010. He's prone to bursts of rage, issuing wild threats and tripping over his own words before they've even left his mouth. But he does have others around him who, like him, have bought into the dream. The mask will slip and the group will further degenerate into Golding's core characteristics: excessive and compulsive behaviour bordering on more extremism and violence. Britain First is going down a plughole, we must prepare ourselves for it to go kicking and screaming.





Jim Dowson with  
Nick Griffin

as if about to jab me in the chest.

We have indeed. They were for all of us, the best of times, the worst of times.

Barely a week has passed since Dowson made newspaper headlines by pulling the proverbial plug on Britain First and leaving his protégé Paul Golding to carry on travelling the country invading mosques and intimidating the imams inside them. Dowson's disciplined militia of God-fearing men and women had descended into beer-swilling racist bullies before his very eyes. "I'd had my doubts, but I did ten days on tour with them in July and I put my hands up. They were no better than the BNP or the English Defence League (EDL). They were looking to start a war and I think I'd moved to a position of hoping we could avert a war. Of course, the war is inevitable I suppose, but there are no *good* Muslims in Golding's eyes and I came to the conclusion that the English are a lost race, an almost totally lost cause."

Shocked by Dowson's very public resignation, Britain First promised they would stop invading mosques as Dowson had requested. Then, stung by the interview he gave the *Daily Mirror* and then his own recorded farewell, Golding led his followers straight back to another mosque. "You know, Nick Griffin warned me, that boy Golding would get me into trouble."

That Dowson should want to avoid trouble or controversy is an eye opener. The bespectacled "country gent" has courted controversy for nearly thirty years with a series of often vulgar stunts. Researching the HNH publication into Britain First *Army of the Right* that we published in June of this year, turned up associations with the likes of Roberto Fiore, Martin Webster, senior British fascists and, of course, Loyalist terrorists. He admits BF was "traumatised" by

the publication. Golding responded by issuing ridiculous threats to journalists who reprinted or used the details, whilst Dowson found angry evangelical Christians and members of Northern Ireland's Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist community up in arms.

"When I quit the BNP they dreamt up sex scandals, the usual stuff they dream up. Or money, their [Griffin's] other obsession. When people question whether you are behaving or acting like a proper Christian and your *own* community call that into question, you have to take stock.

"I was sitting at home with my kids watching Golding and co. intimidating this little old man in his mosque in Crayford (Kent) and I knew it was not right. You did not have to tell me that. I am a man of faith, it has driven me in many directions that people like you (the "liberal, Marxist left") do not approve of, but I have always managed to maintain my Christian principles, and that was wholly un-Christian and against everything I thought I had taught them.

"You're saying it also had racist undertones. To me that was never the intention of BF and it has some non-white members you know ... so I kept telling them, telling them all, 'get down to one of those black churches where they embrace Christianity, learn something of what we're about,' but they really are no different from the BNP and for that I have myself to blame for thinking the English had anything left in them."

In the BNP in particular, there is a recurring theme about 'rebirthing' the English. That and anti-Zionism appealed to Dowson. "There are some very good people in Britain First, Christian folk I convinced to join because we believe in the Bible.

"[Nick] Griffin just hated Jews. Believe

what you want about me, but I have never known a hatred like what the BNP has for Jews."

There's an element of "always the last to know" about Dowson's unfortunate but devastating foray into nazi politics. He openly admits he raised £4 million for the BNP between 2007-2010. The key was Dowson's religious narrative's ability to shock and destabilise people. He claims his first fundraising appeal in 2007 brought in £136,000 for the BNP, an amount of money that had Griffin salivating and Dowson believing there was an undercurrent of Christianity, of evangelical salvation, amongst "all the rubbish and Hitler admirers and perverts" that formed the corpus of the beast. That nearly £400,000 he raised could not be effectively accounted for by 2010, claims Dowson, drove him to "peel off" and form a "Christian" group like Britain First.

"They won't have babies. They can't have babies. They're always too drunk or too stupid to have them. There's no point pointing the finger at immigrants or Muslims coming to your country to replace you if you have failed to keep producing the English you thought you were.

"My sincere belief is that. I'm right, you're wrong. I'm up in court in Belfast every two weeks being harassed for what I believe in, that my Christianity and my Britishness is under threat from the Godless, the liberals and Marxists.

"Worrying about what colour your countrymen are is an English obsession – not mine."

As I wrote in *Army of the Right*, Dowson is driven by extremism. For every predilection that drives him, there is a passage in the Bible he points to as a dire prediction. And then also, "Britain aborts eight million babies per year," he claims. "Mostly they're white babies and the racists are not having enough kids of their own to replace them."

"So when Britain First, the EDL and the BNP act like a recruiting tool for the Jihadists, I wash my hands of them. The far right is beyond hope. You, the cultural Marxists, will have to form an alliance with them otherwise you'll end up on a mountain together."

"I'd like to go to that mosque and meet that imam and apologise for what happened to him. You may not believe it, but I'm one of the good guys."

And then we're back out in the sunshine again. "I'm finished with the far-right. I am a proper patriot and Christian," he barks loudly at us. We wave a bemused goodbye to the self-appointed oracle, driving as we didn't before, up the Shankill and down the Falls for good measure.

# Shut down the peddler of hate



HOPE NOT HATE is calling on Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to investigate the financial affairs of anti-Muslim hate group Britain First, and in particular its leader, Paul Golding.

Golding, who leads the far right group, supposedly earns a living as a PAYE heavy goods vehicle driver. However, HOPE not hate can reveal that Golding actually makes a small fortune from the proceeds of selling merchandise that he does not declare to the tax authorities. Nor does he pay VAT when purchasing the materials he sells on.

The scale of the operation Golding is running is stunning and we believe he has made tens of thousands of pounds profit without paying tax or VAT.

Using a number of unemployed supporters as "runners", Golding oversees some street stalls across the South East of England, particularly targeting poor coastal communities and garrison towns, often passing them off as a charity. The public are encouraged to sign up to a campaign before the sellers apply pressure to the signatories to purchase a "campaign badge".

After being confronted by a former soldier in Southend, Essex, in an incident that went viral on YouTube, and then having the police issue a warning to local shoppers that the stall was not a legitimate armed forces charity, Golding no longer mans the stalls himself. Instead he drops off and picks up activists who divide up their takings between themselves before engaging in heavy boozing sessions.

So big has Golding's badge empire become that two of his closest lieutenants have quit their jobs to sell full-time. Their con is aided by the use of paramilitary "activist jackets" to give the impression that those selling the badges are somehow related to the military.

HOPE not hate has spoken to two badge suppliers who confirm they have supplied Golding with over 10,000 badges that he retails for £3 each via the stalls and on the internet. On a single day in the summer, a stall in Ramsgate took over £300.

Each badge costs Golding around 30p and, even when allowing for the £1 each seller is allowed to keep, leaves the Britain First leader with a healthy profit of up to £1.70.

One Midlands-based badge supplier told HOPE not hate that Golding had told them that Britain First was a government-sponsored servicemen's charity; a blatant lie and one that allowed him to avoid paying VAT on the badges. The company said that it stopped supplying Golding earlier this year when they realised who he and Britain First were.

One badge that Golding produced, to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, in July, sold over 500 pieces when he advertised it on the group's Facebook site.

The actions of Britain First have already drawn the ire of the Cabinet Office for misappropriating royal emblems on T-shirts and hoodies for sale on the group's website.

HOPE not hate is now writing to HMRC to demand a thorough investigation into Golding's business affairs.

# The war veteran who wasn't

**The support Britain First has received from past and current soldiers has alarmed many but now it appears the group has overplayed its hand so much that its credibility is busted. Matthew Collins reports on the group's Armed Forces officer who was not quite the person Golding pretended.**

"PAUL GOLDING'S lies have ruined my life. That is no understatement. He almost killed me." Very dramatic, very strong, but that's exactly what Louis Hodgen, better known as Adam Hodgen, the short-lived Britain First "armed forces officer" thinks.

Hodgen's appointment to the position in early August

was a Godsend to anti-fascists and internet trolls alike. Announced with great fanfare on Britain First's website and Facebook page, Hodgen was paraded as some kind of homespun military hero and, within hours of his appointment, the truth about his military career went viral. Hodgen had thought he was only being made a moderator

Adam Hodgen



of the group's 200-strong military page, which is "invitation only".

"That was not my military career they were banding around. It was one that Paul Golding made up when he saw my real military CV.

"When I heard I had been appointed Britain First's "armed forces officer", I was surprised and delighted, I live for the military and for service. Foolishly, I thought that being their armed forces officer was somehow just an extension of working alongside the friends I had made in Britain First's secret military personnel Facebook group. I didn't realise I had been lied about until the flak began.

"I am very, very proud to have served in the Territorial Army (TA) and I *very nearly* (his emphasis) got a call to go the first Gulf War in 1991 – as did all TA personnel. But I never went. I made it clear that I had never seen action, but that I had served in the Royal Green Jackets (now known as the Rifles) and later (1995) had transferred to the Royal Artillery in the TA. Golding doctored my CV and posted it on line without telling me and even claimed I had served in the Gulf War."

In front of him, 42-year-old Hodgen has piles of letters and certificates and photographs detailing his lifelong obsession and involvement with the military. Everything is perfectly labelled, preserved and presented. "I have Asperger's," he says rather matter of factly. "I'm not in the habit of lying about things. The minute I saw what Paul Golding had done to my military career, I knew there would be trouble. I understand why people hunt down, expose and humiliate people who lie about these things. The minute I tried to complain to Paul, he cut me off. Then all hell was let loose on me."

Just 36 hours after realising he had been used as a front for yet another Britain First con, Louis was in hospital, having suffered a heart attack and a suspected stroke. The more Hodgen appealed and begged for help from Britain First to change their false statement in his name, the more the heat on him was turned up.

In the month since the story broke, police have recorded some four hundred incidents of intimidation, threats and harassment against Louis and



**Enoch Powell**

Adam, how would you like to become our BF military officer? You would be put in charge of the private and public Facebook groups. And would add new recruits to the secret page.

?????

OCS



**Adam Hodgen**

I'd be privileged mate, would I still mod on main page as well? Any help I can do I will OCS.



**Enoch Powell**

It would be better all round if you could concentrate on building up the forces department.

You'd need to update the public page 2-3 times per day.

Moderate both pages.



**Adam Hodgen**

Ok will do my best mate. OCS



**Gary Stewart**

Hi mate do you have a link on how to freeze or close someone's page down or even mess it up a bit lol

his family. They come by phone and now they arrive by letter with chilling threats cut out from newspapers.

It is the work, in the main admits Hodgen, of outraged former soldiers, but if it could at all be, there is something even more sinister afoot he believes.

"I only got involved with Britain First a few months previously. The secret military Facebook group they ran appealed to me. I was introduced by a friend to it.

"In the main it was just about chitchat between former soldiers about the state of the country. It had a real sense of cameraderie about it. Then Isis beheading videos started appearing in there and the moderator, who was employed by Paul to oversee the group, started posting really extreme Christian stuff which put people off and people started arguing with the moderators about it.

"I was asked by one moderator about hacking Facebook and e-mail accounts, asking if I knew how to do it; did anybody know how to do it. I thought 'this is getting a bit sinister' but I hung in there as the users of the group were all good friends by now."

On 3 August, Hodgen received a Facebook message from Golding (who uses the name Enoch Powell) asking him to be moderator of the armed forces group secret group. By 5 August he was fighting for his life. The police have

confirmed that his Facebook page was hacked and as the campaign against him intensified so did the silence of Paul Golding.

"Whoever hacked my Facebook account removed lots of messages about the running of the group, but the police say they are in touch with Facebook to investigate who hacked my account.

"My wife and I feel that Paul decided to join in with the online crucifixion (*sic*). It seems like a good way for him to distance himself from his con. He said he

would deal with the anti-Britain First Facebook page(s) and said they had contacted him. Then, my personal pictures began appearing on there and they had been doctored, with false medals imposed on my pictures of me in uniform."

Hodgen's misery does not end there. As well as the heart attack and the ongoing hate campaign against him, he has also been diagnosed with leukaemia and a degenerative spine defect. His outlook is bleak. But it is the lies about his involvement with the military that seem to hurt him the most, that and losing the comradeship of the group of peers he shared his hopes and fears with.

"I realise Paul is still trying to build a private army, he's like an addict to power and greed. He's taken loads and loads of orders for his merchandise but it doesn't appear to be being sent out. I had to raise a refund claim with Paypal over an undelivered order, but we all shook it off, lots of people were raising claims.

"My family are being targeted now because of these lies which just do not end, as does the constant harassment and threats of violence."

Louis's wife leans across with a supportive hand. "We know Paul Golding did this to us" and, maybe because of his Asperger's, Louis has all of the documents and remaining records of their involvement with Golding neatly filed, labelled and preserved.

# Griffins annus hor

By Matthew Collins

## 2013

was a year of humiliations and frustrations for Nick Griffin. 2014 has been worse. He started the year by having to declare bankruptcy to escape the British National Party's and his own debts, almost all results of his own vanity.

In May of this year, he was dumped from the European Parliament by the electorate in the North West. He didn't go graciously either: what remained of his security entourage fought a pitched battle on the steps of Manchester Town Hall as he slunk in and, then, slunk out of town.

Out on the campaign trail, he had looked "bloated" from hitting the complimentary and European parliamentary travel circuit to excess. He appeared uncomfortable and was halfhearted in driving his "troops" into battle.

He'd even decided that door-knocking was a pointless exercise for anything other than opportunities to sniff out postal votes. On the eve of the election, deflated and humiliated, he was forced to play second fiddle when the National Front turned up and swamped his day of action in Bolton.

Cowed, Griffin obliged when the NF cheekily thrust their banner at him. He looked so gormless, and the act appeared so stupid, that even some anti-fascists doubted the photographs of him from the day were real.

Moves to oust Griffin had been ongoing since almost the very moment he was elected to Brussels in 2009. The party had worried with genuine affection that he could not lead the party and be an effective campaigner as an MEP at the same time.

He took this concern and turned it



into bitterness by launching a series of damaging purges over the next three years that left the party completely bereft of complementary talent to replace him. His petty jealousies were only matched by his misspent loyalty and generosity. He overspent and over-promoted people to keep them glued to the meal ticket.

One BNP insider told us "he fought petty, childish and damaging squabbles against those he feared would expose him. Whatever the shortcomings that terrified Griffin so much were, only he knows. He was almost oblivious to the ones so obviously evident elsewhere."

Excluded from the European parliament and whenever possible from the party's administrative offices, his later replacement, Adam Walker, exacted humiliating revenge on Griffin, the sorcerer being decapitated by his redundant apprentice during a stormy meeting in July.

Walker secured support from his native North East, the BNP's rapidly growing radical youth wing and the London organisers in particular to begin making his move. Others just acquiesced

in the prevalent mood.

Griffin was apparently aware of all of this but even his lickspittle spies within the membership were telling him a fight now would ruin the one thing no other modern fascist would ever have: the legacy of a modicum of success that could still outweigh the endless and often pointless disasters. For Griffin, the very idea that Adam Walker could seriously lead the party was unthinkable, as it still is for many of those who demanded Griffin step down.

Walker launched almost immediate war on the Griffin family and their closest allies. His first act was to tell Griffin's daughter, Jenny Mathys, and her husband Angus that the party would not meet £3,000 worth of credit card debt they had run up.

Griffin called a council of war in early August to protect his "investments" in the party. As a result, Alwyn Deacon, the BNP's elections officer who works in the party's Nuneaton office, was visited by Clive Jefferson, Griffin's former henchman and now short-term Walker loyalist, and forced to appear in a puff

# ribilis

piece for the party's website endorsing Walker's brave new world.

Griffin struck back. After Walker ignored a series of mails from him, Griffin published – through a third party in early September – a damning, allegations-laden document claiming *inter alia* that:

- The BNP is anticipating some £10m to be left to it in wills in coming years. Clive Jefferson is often named as the sole executor of the wills and has the power to change the contents of the wills as he sees fit.
- Walker and Clive Jefferson conspired to replace regional treasurer James Mole with James Hogarth, a non-party member, who in fact, did much of Jefferson's work as treasurer.
- Within only a month of his being replaced, Griffin's former party comrades have become "backstabbing cowards, who hide behind the non-members they appoint to do their bidding".
- There appears to be a clique of militant homosexuals trying to take over the party. Rather like with Martin Webster, with whom Griffin worked during his time in the NF, Griffin has never had a problem with this before he found himself in a hole.
- Walker has (unsurprisingly) ignored Griffin's offer to edit and write for the website to keep Zionists and nazis at bay.
- The European Parliament is chasing the BNP for £21,000 it appears to have claimed fraudulently. The EU is withholding thousands of pounds in redundancy monies owed to Griffin.
- The party and its officers still face being "dragged into another disastrously expensive and uncertain legal action".
- Treasurer Clive Jefferson is a "foul-tempered, paranoid recluse".
- A number of Griffin loyalists (including his son-in-law) face disciplinary action by the party.

## Profile: Adam Walker



ADAM WALKER was one of many people who joined the British National Party (BNP) as it grew and broadened its appeal under Nick Griffin while the party old guard were being side-lined.

Becoming active in 2006, Walker and his brother Mark, were pinup boys. Former soldiers and now teachers, they represented a new breed of BNP member: young and upwardly mobile professionals who had joined a party that had remodelled itself as some kind of voice for troubled middle England.

They were 'super activists'. Adam had even lived in Japan and married a local woman, learning martial arts and teaching it back to the Japanese. But there were also dark clouds gathering. They had dubious temperaments and there were allegations of bullying in the local branches as they rose up the party's ranks in the North East.

Soon, both began having troubles in their jobs. Mark was sacked for sending inappropriate e-mails to a "vulnerable" pupil in 2007, while Adam, calling himself "Corporal Fox", used a school computer to post on a far-right forum that immigrants were "savage animals" and "filth". The BNP claimed the duo were being persecuted.

After Griffin was elected to the European Parliament in 2009, Adam Walker found himself on the party's European payroll. As the party deteriorated, Walker stood firmly by Griffin's side to the point where Griffin privately told him that he would one day cede the leadership to him.

But as Walker's star rose publicly, Griffin and others began to doubt his capabilities.

By 2011, he was beginning to be completely frozen out of the party hierarchy. After an altercation at a party function that same year, Walker was suspended from teaching and given a driving ban. He had brandished a knife at 10 and 12-year-olds and slashed their bicycle tyres.

He was quietly removed from the staff at the European Parliament but bizarrely made both party manager and Yorkshire regional organiser instead. Adam's brother, Mark, was sacked by the party for misconduct in the same year and so began a sulk only, perhaps, bettered by Ted Heath himself. As the BNP sunk and Griffin fell back more and more on past ideologies, Walker found himself politically and personally opposed to Griffin.

In taking over the leadership, Walker has made no secret of his distaste for the growing influence of European fascism on Griffin's most recent activities. His challenge to Griffin was a coalition of the party's desperate; Walker just managing to bully himself to the front of the queue. He was also the only person willing actually to confront Griffin at the meeting of the party's advisory council.

Walker has until July 2015 when the party must hold an election for the position. His most pressing task will be to reinvigorate the party and what remains of its activist corps, even if it was he that allowed so much of it to die. Whether he'll face a reinvigorated Griffin, a Griffin stalking horse or even a former close friend next year is yet unclear.

He knows, as do we, that he has no chance of reinvigorating the party electorally.

# Comment: Shining a light on abuse

**Nick Lowles** on yet another report into how vulnerable young people are being abused and then let down by the system



THE REPORT of the independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, led by Professor Alexis Jay, is harrowing reading, both in the scale of the horrendous abuse it exposes and the appalling errors and cover-up by senior council staff, local politicians and police.

Even more depressing is the fact that none of this comes as a complete surprise. Similar failings were highlighted in previous reports, as in Rochdale, and we will undoubtedly see more such reports in the future. Young people have been let down by the system for far too long.

What the perpetrators did was truly awful and the subsequent errors and cover-up by those in the council and police are inexcusable and criminal. More of those who were involved must be brought to justice and those in authority held accountable, starting with South Yorkshire's police and crime commissioner, Shaun Wright, who should resign after failing to act on three reports on the widespread nature of the abuse during his time as Cabinet member responsible for Children and Young People's Services on Rotherham Council.

The report details a combination of factors behind the failure of Rotherham Council to understand the scale of the problem, including disbelieving both the victims and the social workers who raised the issue, concern over being considered racist for highlighting the problem and a mood of denial amongst prominent Muslim councillors about the

extent of the problem within the local Muslim communities.

Sadly, these are all problems we have heard before. HOPE not hate was vocal in its criticism of how local authorities were dealing with on-street grooming from as far back as 2005 when we joined forces with Angela Sinfield, a mother of a girl who had been abused, and the then Keighley MP Ann Cryer. We stressed the need to push aside any racial or religious sensitivities when child protection is at stake and we supported changes to the law that were being championed by Ann. More recently – last year – we came together with a number of other organisations and individuals to call for greater awareness about the threat of on-street grooming by gangs and encouraging communities to shop perpetrators.

As with have seen with the Jimmy Savile affair and with the long history of abuse within the Catholic Church, young people are sexually abused by people of all colours and religions but let us not pretend that there is not a specific problem with some men within the British Pakistani/Kashmiri communities around on-street grooming by gangs. Rotherham is sadly just the latest in a long, and growing, list of British towns and cities which has experienced grooming by these gangs. So, if it is right to call on public institutions like the BBC and the NHS to review procedures and the Catholic Church to address abuse by its clergy, we should

# What anti-fascists should do in Rotherham

**STRANGE as it may seem, we need to take politics out of the debate and put the interests of these young people first. Grooming cases crop up, the far right shout and demonstrate, the left and Muslim communities go on the defensive and nothing actually changes to help the young people being abused.**

**If we are genuine about caring about these people who have been let down by everyone, then we need to put their interests first.**

**It is only by demonstrating that we genuinely care – and have some ideas as to how the issue can be addressed – that we can hope to keep people away from the far right. Jumping in and simply attacking far right groups for exploiting the issue will fall on deaf ears and, if done around having a counter-demonstration against a right wing anti-grooming protest, is likely to be counter-productive.**

**So here are my suggestions for what anti-fascists need to do in Rotherham:**

1. We need to demonstrate that we understand and share the anger of local people. Too much of what is written gives only passing condemnation for what has happened before moving on to justify, qualify or refute key allegations or the way the issue has been reported.
2. We need to be unequivocal in our condemnation of the perpetrators and repeat it time and again.

Angela Sinfield explains how grooming affected her and her family



3. We should call for the fullest prosecution possible for the perpetrators. There should be a new police investigation and this should be led or overseen by an outside force.
4. Those in authority who overlooked the scale of the problem or refused to take action when it was brought to their attention need to be sacked or disciplined.
5. We need community leaders to speak out on this issue both in condemnation and encouraging people to stop perpetrators. We need greater support for young people to come forward and speak out, in both the white and Muslim communities. We need to address the misogyny and the negative attitudes of some men towards women.
6. Cuts to social services, education and youth services have clearly played a part, albeit a secondary role, so there is a need for extra resources.
7. A new national police task force needs to be established to investigate what is clearly a network of abusers around the country.
8. We need to make it compulsory for local authorities to inform other local authorities when they place vulnerable young people in private rented accommodation/foster care in their areas.

Only when we have demonstrated a sincere interest in the subject and offer some real solutions, can we hope to stop far right groups from exploiting the situation.

not shy away from dealing with the problem within specific communities.

Back in 2012, I wrote a piece entitled: *Grooming – an issue we cannot ignore*, which explored the problem and highlighted the background of a growing number of the perpetrators. Unsurprisingly, I came under attack from certain quarters but, if anything, I underestimated the scale of the problem.

"Unfortunately, too many people have remained silent for too long," I wrote at the time. "Police and local authorities have been slow to protect these young girls. Leading figures in local Muslim communities have often been too slow in speaking out on this issue, and in some cases simply dismissed it as far right propaganda. They have been joined in this by some on the left, who have been too quick to silence any discussion."

"While the perpetrators of on-street grooming obviously have a low opinion of the white girls they abuse, they have a similarly poor opinion of all females. Grooming has more to do with misogyny rather than specifically religion/race."

The article also quoted Sara Khan, from the women's human rights group, Inspire. "As a Bradford-born and raised Muslim woman from the Kashmiri/Mirpuri community, I understand the cultural complexities. Let's be clear: it's not just white women that are viewed as inferior – many from

these Pakistani rural villages believe all women are second class citizens. The culture of conservative Kashmiri/Mirpuri community has at its root a deep-seated misogyny with the aim of controlling every aspect of a woman's life and reducing her into subservience."

I also attacked the BNP and EDL for having us believe that grooming was a consequence of Islam as a religion as the facts simply do not back this up. The vast majority of perpetrators are from one specific community, rather than spread across all Muslim communities, so it is here we have to address the problem.

Misogyny and sexual abuse cut across all communities but this fact should not allow us to turn a blind eye to a particular manifestation of this problem. The Rotherham report highlights the need for the police to investigate child sexual abuse vigorously wherever it appears and more work needs to be done within the British Pakistani/Kashmiri communities to raise awareness of the issue, challenge behaviour and report and prosecute perpetrators.

We are all angry, but we cannot allow this to become an opportunity for racists to whip up anti-Muslim hatred. At the same time, neither can we allow a fear of a backlash to silence us from speaking out and, more importantly, addressing the problem. Anything less will be betraying the young people who are being targeted.

# The nazi bus driver

by Nick Lowles and Joe Mulhall

HOPE not hate can exclusively reveal that a criminally convicted top London nazi is a bus driver and a Unite shop steward.

Westley Lay, from West London, is a veteran nazi who has been active in the British far right for over 15 years with links to Combat 18, the National Front, BNP and, more recently, the British wing of Golden Dawn. For his day job, Lay drives London buses and boasts to his nazi mates that he is a Unite shop steward.

Lay is obsessed with the notorious white power band Skrewdriver and its deceased lead singer Ian Stuart Donaldson. So infatuated, in fact, that he is turning a room in his house into a Skrewdriver shrine.

One item that might not be going on display is a pair of cherry red Doctor Marten boots he bought from a German skingirl after being told they once belonged to Donaldson. Lay paid £200 for the worn boots, only to find out that they belonged to former C18 man Del O'Connor.

Lay's older brother, George, is also a

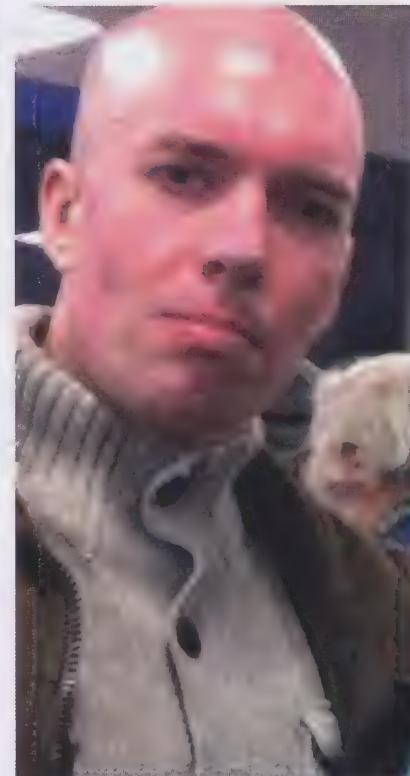
regular at nazi events and both are well known to be habitual shoplifters. A few years ago, Lay was imprisoned for threatening and intimidating an old man, who had earlier been attacked by George, after bumping into him on a bus. Despite his conviction, Lay is now driving a London bus.

He has recently gone to war against Combat 18, which he dubs "Compost 18" and its leader, Will Browning, "Brownpants". Lay has accused the C18 leader of promoting the Cockney Rejects and instructing his supporters, at an east London club where they control the door, to assault a man who gave a Nazi salute at a gig during a Rejects performance.

If Lay's attendance at openly nazi events wasn't enough, perhaps his employers might also be concerned to read a recent Facebook page where he hopes that a former C18 comrade of his is hanged for turning his back on the organisation.

Last November, whilst on the National Front's Remembrance Sunday march, he made threats to shoot a HOPE not hate photographer.

## The nazi law man



BY DAY, Piers Mellor is a Business Development Manager at Expert Law, which is "a leading online legal services provider, across a number of areas of law", including human rights and immigration law. Outside working hours, the London-based Australian is one of Britain's most promiscuous nazis.

In the last few years, Mellor has been an active member of the uniform-wearing New British Union; has attended National Front meetings; marched with the English Defence League, English Volunteer Force and the South East Alliance; attended lectures by the infamous Holocaust denier David Irving and happily wears T-shirts of the National Socialist black metal band Der Stürmer (named after Julius Streicher's infamous Nazi Party tabloid newspaper). He is also a leading member of the laughably small New Dawn which hero-worships Golden Dawn, the Greek nazi party.

Firm friends with long time nazi and C18-affiliate Eddy Stampton, Mellor supplements his pay from Expert Law by selling violently antisemitic and nazi merchandise such as badges and flags. One has to ask what any law firm, especially one that deals with human rights and immigration, is doing employing a man like Piers Mellor.



Westley Lay marching with veteran nazi Richard Edmonds on last November's Remembrance Sunday demonstration, organised by the National Front

# No Right Turn

**With current polling suggesting that UKIP is likely to win the forthcoming Clacton by-election by a landslide, there will be some politicians who will urge their parties to move to the right in order to prevent a haemorrhaging of votes in next year's General Election.**

**This, Joelle Chess argues, is not a wise choice.**

The threat of UKIP in the 2015 general election is becoming increasingly significant, with Lord Ashcroft's polling suggesting the party might fairly easily win at least two seats in 2015, Thurrock and South Thanet, and come close in a number of others. Just as significantly, the polls suggest that the strength of UKIP support across the country could influence the outcome of the election.

As battle lines are drawn for the 2015 election a key question arises: will the rush of support towards UKIP be halted by more right-wing promises from the main parties in an attempt to neutralise UKIP's message? Or should parties try to appeal to a more progressive, as yet under-tapped, electorate? Should parties fight fire with fire or fire with water?

Within the Conservative Party, this debate rages. Lord Finkelstein commented: "the issue UKIP raises is the opposite of the one the Conservative party needs

to answer." He argues "we don't have enough young people, we don't have enough ethnic minorities, we do not have enough people in prosperous rising cities".

This is not just a Tory issue. Some people in the Labour Party believe a tougher stance needs to be taken on immigration to tackle UKIP's growing appeal. In May, seven MPs penned a letter to Ed Miliband saying he should restrict the free movement of labour from Europe.

In contrast, ex-shadow health Minister Diane Abbott says Labour cannot win the next election by "fighting on Tory ground". Similarly, Tony Blair has referred to UKIP as "nasty and unpleasant", saying the way to take on UKIP is to stand up to them. Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Home Secretary, takes a more pragmatic approach saying "UKIP is preying on public anxiety with cheap slogans. But when the system is under strain we need smart and

effective controls."

It is questionable whether any move to the right by the main political parties will have any impact on potential UKIP voters anyway. In the last issue of *HOPE not hate*, Sunder Katwala suggested that a deep mistrust of the main political parties is a key factor in changing supporters' allegiance. They have little belief that promises will be followed through.

## The battlegrounds

Because of our electoral system, the outcome of the 2015 election will be decided in a few dozen marginal constituencies and, while a strong UKIP vote might generate a few surprises, most have been election battlegrounds for several

years (if not decades). It is in the context of these 50-60 key seats, that the debate over whether parties should move to the right in the face of UKIP's rise should be considered.

The most marginal seat in the country is Hampstead and Kilburn, which Labour won in 2010 by just 42 votes. This is 0.1% more than the Conservatives and 1.59% more than the Liberal Democrats.

While traditional political strategising will focus on those who normally vote, it is worth considering those who did not. Over 27,000 people who were registered in the constituency did not vote, so as well as looking at winning over those who voted for other parties, the political parties



should consider targeting those who did not vote.

Similarly, in Thurrock, where the margin between the Conservatives and Labour was just 92, turnout was only 59%. Persuading even a small number of these non-voters to vote could significantly alter the outcome in these elections.

### Who isn't voting?

According to the Runnymede Trust, only 88% of ethnic minorities said they were registered to vote. This compares to 95% of the public as a whole. Black Africans

were the least registered at only 59% compared with 78% of Pakistanis and Indians, 73% of Bangladeshis and 72% of the Black Caribbean population.

Furthermore, validated registration percentages showed a disparity, suggesting some people thought they were registered when in fact they were not. For the Black African community, 11% thought they were registered but they were not on the validated register.

Young people are a second group where registration

to vote is low. According to the Electoral Commission in 2011, only 56% were registered to vote. This was a rise over 2005 but was still the third lowest turnout for this younger age group since 1964.

According to the *Daily Mirror*, a YouGov poll in May 2014 found only 41% of eligible first time voters said they would vote.

### The influence of unregistered groups

Data from the *UK Polling Report* for the 2010 election was compared to that for 2015

for the 100 most marginal parliamentary seats in the country. For all seats, the full-time student population and the black and minority ethnic (BME) population increased. This suggests an increasing influence of these groups on the election results.

In Hampstead and Kilburn the student population increased from 7.7% in 2010 to 10% in 2015. The BME population increased from 27.4% to 34.5%. In Thurrock, the BME population increased even more significantly from 5.5% to 17.5%. This rise in BME

**Table 1: 40 marginal seats**

	Majority (vote)	Majority (%)	Turnout (%)	Conservative (%)	Labour (%)	Lib Dem (%)	Green (%)	UKIP (%)	BNP (%)	BME Population (%)	Students (%)	Under 25s (%)
Hampstead and Kilburn	42.00	0.10	66.14	32.53	32.61	31.02	1.43	0.77	0.62	59.70	10.00	11.10
North Warwickshire	54.00	0.10	67.68	40.01	39.90	11.55	0.00	2.81	4.44	7.30	6.00	12.40
Camborne and Redruth	66.00	0.20	66.91	37.30	16.22	37.15	1.36	5.03	0.00	4.40	8.00	12.00
Bolton West	92.00	0.20	67.21	38.06	38.25	17.07	1.14	3.97	0.00	8.80	7.00	12.80
Thurrock	92.00	0.20	59.67	36.36	36.16	10.56	0.00	7.31	7.80	23.50	6.00	14.50
Oldham East and Saddleworth	103.00	0.20	62.15	26.11	31.46	31.23	0.00	3.81	5.65	20.60	8.00	14.80
Hendon	106.00	0.20	63.98	42.07	41.85	12.29	1.11	2.05	0.00	62.60	14.00	16.20
Sheffield Central	165.00	0.40	62.42	9.98	40.65	40.25	3.69	1.55	2.14	33.00	39.00	35.30
Solihull	175.00	0.30	72.73	42.28	8.82	42.60	0.00	2.16	2.93	17.70	8.00	12.40
Oxford West and Abingdon	176.00	0.30	65.62	42.13	10.57	41.82	2.09	2.68	0.00	20.00	14.00	12.00
Ashfield	192.00	0.40	62.78	22.02	33.43	33.03	0.00	1.92	5.72	3.70	6.00	13.10
Southampton, Itchen	192.00	0.40	61.14	35.40	35.83	20.31	1.32	4.23	0.00	15.00	14.00	17.90
Cardiff North	194.00	0.40	73.13	37.25	36.85	18.20	0.76	2.36	0.00	12.00	13.00	13.80
Sherwood	214.00	0.40	69.25	38.83	38.40	14.72	0.00	3.01	3.55	4.00	6.00	12.70
Mid Dorset and North Poole	269.00	0.60	73.21	44.01	5.81	44.57	0.00	4.46	0.00	4.00	6.00	11.70
Norwich South	310.00	0.70	65.16	22.72	28.45	29.09	14.79	2.39	1.45	16.00	18.00	19.30
Edinburgh South	316.00	0.70	74.30	21.43	34.50	33.78	2.00	0.00	0.00	36.60	15.90	n/a
Stockton South	332.00	0.70	68.75	38.56	37.91	14.97	0.00	2.90	3.06	8.00	9.00	14.20
Lancaster and Fleetwood	333.00	0.80	64.06	35.69	34.91	18.92	4.37	2.36	2.17	10.00	22.00	17.50
Bradford East	365.00	0.90	63.85	26.12	31.92	32.80	0.00	0.00	4.46	51.00	10.00	17.60
Broxstowe	389.00	0.70	75.25	37.97	37.25	16.43	0.78	2.20	2.62	12.00	9.00	13.30
Truro and Falmouth	435.00	0.90	69.53	41.45	9.57	40.57	1.75	3.89	0.00	5.00	11.00	14.70
Swansea West	504.00	1.40	58.66	20.59	34.28	32.88	1.12	1.99	2.53	14.00	25.00	23.30
Newton Abbot	523.00	1.10	70.21	42.69	6.96	41.61	1.44	6.35	0.00	4.00	6.00	11.50
Wirral South	531.00	1.30	72.19	38.88	40.19	16.32	0.00	3.15	0.00	4.00	7.00	11.40
Amber Valley	536.00	1.20	66.13	38.24	37.09	14.30	0.00	1.95	6.89	3.00	5.00	12.50
Chesterfield	549.00	1.20	64.30	15.61	38.71	37.53	1.30	3.10	0.00	5.30	6.00	12.90
Derby North	613.00	1.40	64.50	30.98	32.31	27.41	0.00	1.80	4.34	18.00	14.00	17.60
Kingston upon Hull North	641.00	1.90	52.45	12.99	38.81	36.90	1.42	4.04	4.29	13.00	17.00	23.50
Dudley North	649.00	1.70	57.52	36.54	38.21	10.41	0.00	8.36	4.86	16.00	7.00	14.10
Wolverhampton South West	691.00	1.70	69.25	40.11	38.41	15.78	0.00	3.65	0.00	40.00	11.00	14.20
Great Grimsby	714.00	2.20	54.01	30.43	32.59	22.34	0.00	6.18	4.59	5.00	7.00	16.00
Waveney	769.00	1.50	65.57	39.95	38.45	13.23	2.27	5.21	0.00	4.00	6.00	12.30
Wells	800.00	1.40	70.51	42.42	7.49	43.85	1.13	3.05	1.79	5.00	7.00	12.00
Carlisle	853.00	2.00	65.31	38.92	36.92	15.41	1.44	2.27	2.55	5.00	7.00	13.90
Morecambe and Lunesdale	866.00	2.00	63.06	41.10	39.13	13.20	1.36	4.20	0.00	5.00	7.00	12.10
Rochdale	889.00	1.90	58.79	17.89	35.98	34.06	0.00	4.31	0.00	32.00	9.00	16.30
Telford	978.00	2.40	64.41	35.78	38.12	15.27	0.00	5.79	3.61	9.00	7.00	15.00

population, if mobilised, could have a major influence on the chances of UKIP winning the seat.

Furthermore, the percentage of under-25s in the population of these constituencies averages at 14.9%. This group may also have a large impact should their vote be utilised.

*Operation Black Vote* found that the BME electorate could decide over a quarter of the seats in the 2015 general election. Of the 650 constituencies up for grabs, BME voters outnumber the majority held by the current MP in 168 seats. For example, in Southampton Itchen, Labour has a majority over the Conservatives of just 192 votes but there is a BME electorate of 6,915.

The need for the BME vote is particularly pertinent in the Conservative party. In the 2010 election, they received only 26% of the vote compared to Labour's 68%. In 2014, *The Guardian* reported that the Conservative's "race deficit" could cost them between 20 and 40 seats in 2015.

Similarly, a poll of 1000 students conducted by *Opinion Panel* found the support of students is significantly in favour of the Labour Party. *The Independent* reported in 2014 that students are more pro-European with 83% of a 1200 person poll saying they would vote "yes" in a referendum on membership.

Where support has dwindled for the main parties in the student population, it has shifted to the Green Party rather than UKIP. Students are more likely to vote for progressive policies rather than be attracted by the right.



To read the full *Fear and HOPE* report, visit [www.fearandhope.org.uk/](http://www.fearandhope.org.uk/)

Targeting the student population can be successful. In the 2010 election, the Liberal Democrats targeted students by pledging to counter a rise in tuition fees. This promise was mirrored by a rise in student support to 50% in the *Opinion Panel* survey. However, when this promise was broken, support bottomed out. Unregistered groups will be attracted to progressive policies but breaking promises is a fatal move.

### Fire or water?

The difference in the number of votes cast for the main parties in key marginal constituencies is very small. Therefore, convincing groups with low turnouts and registration levels to vote could cause significant changes to who holds the seat in 2015.

In all the top 100 marginal constituencies, the proportion of BME and student populations has grown. These groups are an increasingly important base for gaining votes. BME groups

also show significantly lower turnouts in elections and there is decreasing interest amongst young people.

As stated above students and younger voters are more likely to support progressive policies. BME communities are also more likely to support more progressive approaches to immigration, welfare and policing reforms.

Even amongst a section of the white working class who are attracted to UKIP, research suggests that the underlying reason is economic pessimism and the feeling of being abandoned by the main political parties.

Addressing these economic insecurities with policies that will make a practical difference is much more likely to win back these voters than appearing hard on immigration or supposed benefit cheats.

It is clear that increasingly progressive policies could be very important for winning marginal seats across the UK. Trying to beat UKIP at their own game by offering policies that seek to charm

their supporters is a cynical strategy and destined to fail.

Parties should create policies that convince under-registered groups that they will not sacrifice their stance when under threat from a seemingly increasingly powerful right-wing.

Engaging and informing minority and student voters about the political process should be implemented in tandem with this but not as a stand-alone strategy. Candidates should focus primarily on giving these groups of people a reason to vote.

Many non-voters are uninspired by the right. By communicating with them, parties might find they turn up on Election Day. Especially if their local candidate has shown they are interested in keeping them involved.

*HOPE not hate's Fear and HOPE* report clearly demonstrated that economic pessimism was the key driver for fear and hate in society. While 23% of the population had deeply entrenched racist views, another 28% were quite open to immigration and living in a multicultural society but were concerned about the impact future immigration would have on their economic situation.

Addressing these economic insecurities, the survey of over 5,000 people found, would go much further to alleviating their concerns than tightening immigration controls.

Table 2: Estimated percentage turnout by age at General Elections 1964-2010

	1964	1966	1970	1974	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
18-24	76.4	60.5	64.9	70.2	62.5	62.5	63.9	66.6	67.3	54.1	40.4	38.2	51.8
25-34	70.7	70.8	66.5	77.2	69.0	72.4	67.6	74.0	77.3	62.2	45.0	47.7	57.3
35-44	79.5	80.0	72.8	78.7	73.9	76.3	76.2	74.9	78.3	70.2	55.7	61.6	64.4
45-54	79.1	79.8	74.9	73.1	76.6	81.2	77.6	79.9	81.8	76.4	63.2	65.5	67.5
55-64	78.4	78.0	74.1	82.2	76.6	81.4	77.2	78.9	78.1	79.9	64.0	72.6	69.8
65+	76.7	75.9	77.2	79.2	76.0	77.7	73.1	76.0	79.2	77.7	70.1	74.3	74.7
All	77.1	75.8	72.0	78.8	72.8	76.0	72.7	75.3	77.7	71.4	59.4	61.3	65.0

Sources: British Election Study (re-analysis of datasets)

# Giving a voice to the voiceless

**Changes to the way people register to vote are set to deliver the biggest single act of disenfranchisement since all adults got the vote. Elisabeth Pop examines the impact of Individual Electoral Registration on democratic engagement and calls for a huge Voter Registration campaign.**

IN TODAY'S BRITAIN, people are looking for answers to solve the immediate problems of unemployment, lack of housing, economic instability and their worries about what the country's future has in store for them and their children. In this uncertain environment, there are far right forces trying to exploit these fears, providing manipulative answers and hateful rhetoric that divide our communities when they are at their most vulnerable.

The apparent simple answers and quick fixes provided by these extremists have the majority of the UK gripped in an "us vs them" culture where many of our complex social and economic problems are being falsely portrayed as being forced upon us by external factors. Worse still, mainstream political parties are either

leaving a vacuum that can only be filled by the rhetoric and policies of division or are reinforcing the atmosphere of fear and hate fuelled by headlines scaremongering our most vulnerable or disenfranchised communities.

At this crucial time in British democracy, a change to electoral law risks increasing the gap between the elected few and the voiceless many.

Councils are now contacting voters across the UK about the changes to the way we register to vote. The government is trying to sell the new Individual Electoral Registration (IER) system as a way to give people "more control and ownership over the process and increase the accuracy of the register". Besides dropping the household registration system, the new IER also asks individuals

to provide their date of birth and National Insurance number during the registration process, apparently in a much needed effort "to verify that everyone on the register is who they say they are" and "to ensure that there is greater trust in the legitimacy and fairness of our elections".

## **Who votes already?**

In December 2011, the Electoral Commission looked into the extent and nature of non-registration in Britain. Their findings clearly show that those most likely to be left voiceless are students, those who have moved frequently in recent years, those who live in rented accommodation and black and minority ethnic communities (BME) and migrant communities.

**56%**

of 19-24 year olds  
are registered,  
compared with 94%  
of those aged 65+

**44%**

of those not  
registered to vote  
mistakenly believe  
that they are

**77%**  
of people from  
BME communities  
are registered  
(compared with  
86% of white  
people)



### Students, the poor and minority communities further at risk

While no one doubts the move to IER is the “biggest change to voter registration in a generation”, few agree on the consequences. The Electoral Commission says 80% of those on the electoral register would automatically move onto the new system, as their identity has already been verified against other government records (such as tax and Department of Work and Pensions records). However, it also stresses that about 10 million people will need to re-register. Therefore, many fear that those who are disengaged from voting or already feel disenfranchised will not choose to register and will thus join the ranks of the already existing six million people who are entitled to vote in the UK but are not currently registered.

Fortunately, voter registration is still mandatory until the 2015 General Election, but fears have been expressed by the wider civil society and NGOs that the UK voter registration rates will drop significantly if there is not a clear mechanism to ensure that those 10 million who need to re-register and the 6 million already unregistered are actually encouraged to do so. We could potentially see up to 20% of the

UK population with a right to vote left voiceless.

Council officials are supposed to go door-to-door to make sure voters lists are as accurate as possible, but five councils failed to meet the watchdog's standards last year alone and cuts to Electoral Services mean that many councils are unable to run large scale voter registration drives.

The Electoral Commission ran a confirmation dry run of data-matching in 2013. Their findings confirm that those groups who are currently under-registered are also at risk from being missed by data-matching.

HOPE not hate has since contacted individual councils across the country to get their opinion on the expected rate of drop off from the electoral register. The worrying picture below is made worse by the “spill-over” effect of this increased drop off rate – a reduction in the electoral population will automatically mean further cuts to local services, which already find themselves under tremendous pressure.

Lewisham has recorded a 22% drop off rate across the borough, with the parliamentary constituency of Lewisham Deptford experiencing a 29.8% decline. Across Manchester, there was initially only

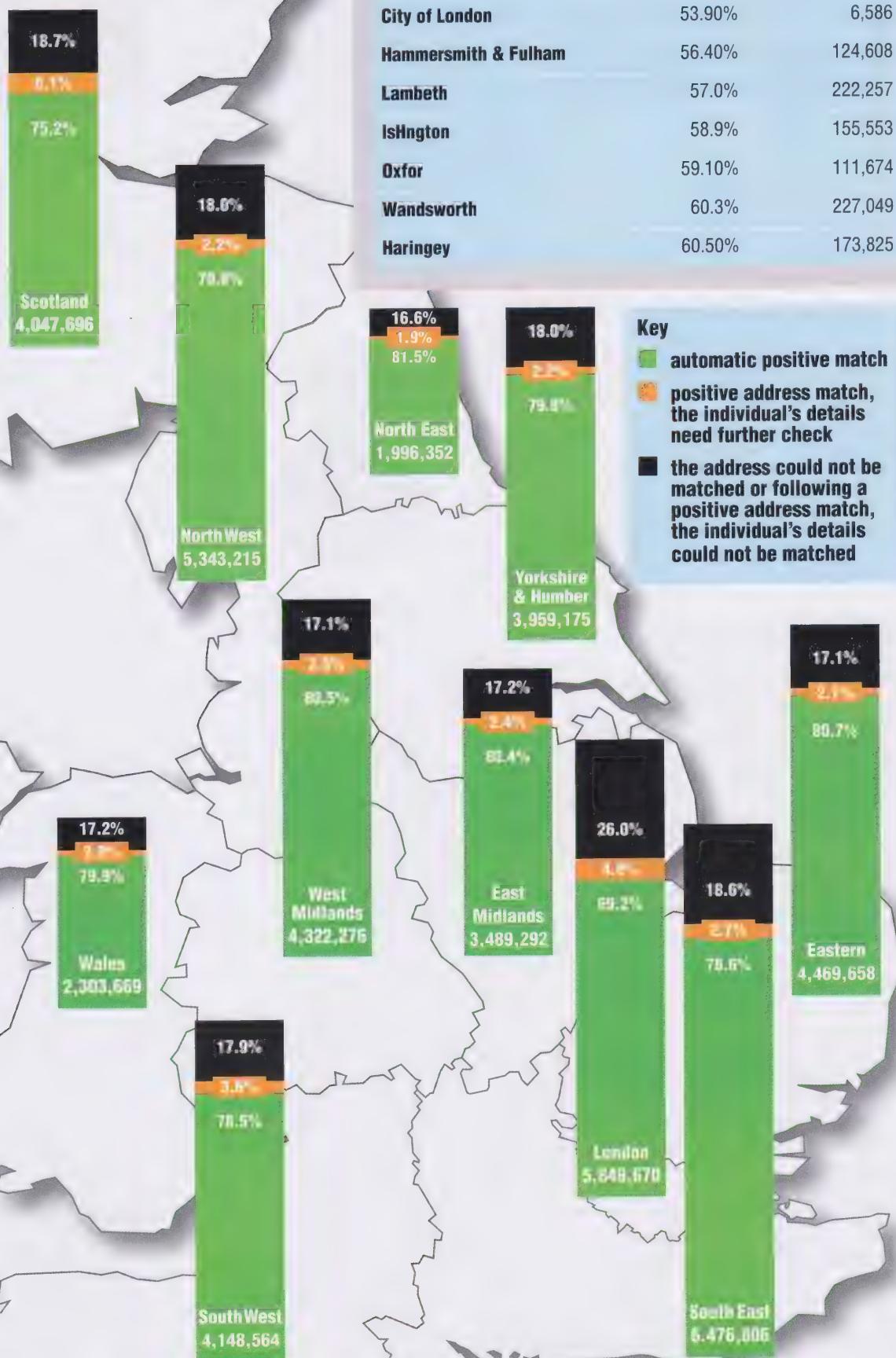
a 65% match, but subsequent work has pushed this up to 75%, though that's still appallingly low. In Manchester Central ward, where a lot of young people live, only 22% of people who were previously on the register were carried over.

In other local authorities across the North West, between 75%-80% of those on the register have been transferred over, but even this relatively high figure still leaves a decline of 20-25%. In Stoke-on-Trent, which has a relatively settled population, the drop-off rate is 12%.

### The distressing truth behind the stats

HOPE not hate also spoke to the Electoral Reform Society and they argue that the dry run tells a very worrying story. Data-matching and the electoral registration system as a whole mostly fall down when you have a highly transient population. This is because the annual canvasses act as the primary driver of registration. Hence people moving in after the canvass tend to be much less likely to be registered. So people who move around a lot are the least likely to be registered (while the UK average data-matching is 78.1%, the London rate is 69.2%). Groups particularly at risk thus include students, those who rent privately and ethnic minority communities.

# UK voter registration map



## Ten wards with lowest match rate

Ward	Local Authority	Ward green match rate	Local authority overall green match rate
<b>City centre</b>	Manchester	25.0%	62.8%
<b>Cathays</b>	Cardiff	24.1%	71.8%
<b>Central</b>	Liverpool	23.5%	75.8%
<b>Market</b>	Cambridge	22.4%	61.2%
<b>Aberystwyth Central</b>	Ceredigion	18.5%	69.0%
<b>Carfax</b>	Oxford	17.6%	59.1%
<b>Keele</b>	Newcastle-under-Lyme	15.70%	80.5%
<b>Heslington</b>	York	11.40%	74.4%
<b>Holywell</b>	Oxford	7.50%	59.1%
<b>University</b>	Lancaster	0.1%	75.0%

The first can be demonstrated in the data on the lowest data matching wards. The lowest data-matching rate of any ward in the dry run was the University ward in Lancaster which has a match-rate of just 0.1%. The University ward essentially just covers Lancaster University's Halls of Residence. Only first year students may stay in these so, naturally, it is very rare that someone will still be there a year after the annual canvass.



#### The HOPE not hate *Our Voice for HOPE* campaign

HOPE not hate could not stand by and watch already vulnerable or apathetic communities left voiceless.

Starting this autumn we are launching our *Our Voice for HOPE* campaign.

We are establishing *Our Voice for HOPE* teams of volunteers in key areas of the country where we hope to work over the next year to deliver local Voter Registration campaigns. These groups will both raise awareness of the new Voter Registration requirements in local communities and target very specific localities to run Voter Registration drives.

We will also seek to form partnerships and alliances with national organisations to raise a wider awareness of the issue. HOPE not hate is already supporting the *Daily Mirror's #NoVoteNoVoice*, which seeks to register one million people in a year, and we are also developing links with the National Union of Students and the Bite the Ballot campaign.

Engaging in the democratic process is vital if we are going to give communities hope and ensure that their voices are heard. The more people are disenfranchised, the greater the sense of hopelessness. And this is when the vultures on the right will seek to take advantage.

**56%**  
of European Union citizens and 68% of Irish / Commonwealth citizens are registered on the local government registers, compared with 84% of UK citizens



**56%**  
of people living in private rented homes are registered, compared with 88% for homeowners

**IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED IN THE OUR VOICE CAMPAIGN PLEASE EMAIL ELISABETH AT [ELISABETH@HOPENOTHATE.ORG.UK](mailto:ELISABETH@HOPENOTHATE.ORG.UK)**



# In search of HOPE

**Nick Lowles reflects on 10 years of HOPE not hate and argues for more Hope and less hate in the future**

**H**OPE not hate – what a great name!” enthused Lisa Maxwell.

Better known to the British public as DI Samantha Nixon from TV show *The Bill*, Lisa was articulating how we, too, saw the campaign: a great name, a catchy title, and above all something that threw into stark relief our positive message with the hatred, division and bitterness of the British National Party (BNP).

Above all, it was a name we could *use*.

HOPE not hate evolved in a completely organic, unplanned fashion. It had begun as a phrase on a t-shirt, then as a banner on our leaflets and newspapers. Gradually it started absorbing our other activities, becoming the ‘identity’ for everything we did. Searchlight, as we were known 10 years ago, eventually morphed into the HOPE not hate campaign.

And yet even as it emerged, our message of ‘hope’ was defined by what we were *against*. For many years we would tell our supporters that HOPE not hate was there “to provide a positive antidote to hate.” We were, to all intents and purposes, a foil to the BNP.

And of course, we became very successful at what we did. I would like to think that our campaigning was a crucial factor in the demise of the BNP. We took it on in the very communities where it was organising; we exposed its lies and attempts to divide communities; we gave local people the confidence and platforms to speak out against racism and encouraged political parties to re-engage with communities. Ultimately, we built an election machine which could defeat the fascist politics of the BNP at the ballot box.

It was only in the autumn of 2011, a full seven years after our ‘birth’, that I fully understood the power of HOPE

not hate. We asked our supporters what the words in our name meant to them; I was truly shocked and humbled by their response. HOPE not hate, to our supporters, was far more than a catchy title or even a formidable electoral operation. It was, they said, a *value system* they wanted to live by. That was a powerful message – and a daunting one – with a responsibility to live up to those values.

Coinciding as it did with the clear demise of the BNP, everything seemed to be coming together to a crunch point at that moment in 2011. For the first time I had a chance to reflect on the campaign and where it was going. Perhaps I was changing, too, and understanding more about the world and issues we had to confront. Either way, our supporters’ responses had a profound impact upon me: I could see the potential to move away from simply holding the line *against* groups like the BNP and move into newer, wider territory where we could tell people what we were *for*.

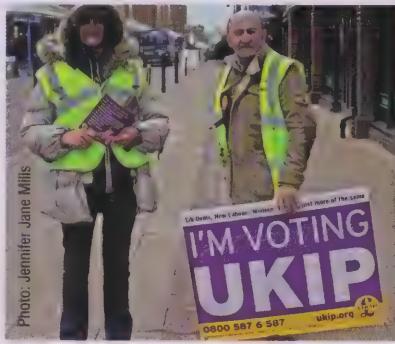
From now on, we would inspire and mobilise, campaigning positively on values we (and we knew many others) believed in.

One of our greatest frustrations was the feeling that we were simply firefighting – holding the line and filling the vacuum until the political parties got their act together. The BNP gained in some of the most deprived communities in Britain, especially former industrial heartlands where ‘identity’ had been left in pieces. Those who could had left, leaving behind an increasingly angry and resentful population with little optimism about the future. The BNP merely preyed on their despair and bitterness, offering them simple solutions and easy scapegoats for difficult issues. Of course, the BNP had no real answers, but with little else on offer it was easy to see how

## UKIP

THE TRADITIONAL far right is in decline and what remains is becoming hard line and violent. The real threat now is UKIP which holds a very different view of Britain to ours and whose increasing use of anti-immigrant rhetoric only sows division and blame in our communities.

UKIP is not the BNP and we must counter it in a very different way. While exposing the racism and extremism of its members and policies, we must be more nuanced in our approach and address the underlying reasons some people vote for them by working with others to offer a more positive and hopeful future.



some people became prey to its elixir of hate and prejudice.

While we were eventually able to defeat the BNP with our targeted campaigns, the material conditions on the ground changed little.

Our *Fear and HOPE* report produced in 2011 – which researched the country’s different ‘identity tribes’ – was a seminal piece of research and clarified for us that *economic pessimism* was the most important driver of fear. Left unchecked, and exploited by political groups, that fear could easily turn into hate. Following on from *Fear and HOPE* we pushed deeper into community

organising, tentatively and with mixed results, becoming more adept and successful as time progressed. Our success with the project on the Wrens Nest estate in Dudley, where we helped bring in a new confidence and openness to a community which for too many years had been a breeding ground for racism, and our ongoing support for the work of Hackney Unites, were key building blocks in our own education and learning about the importance of long-term community organising.

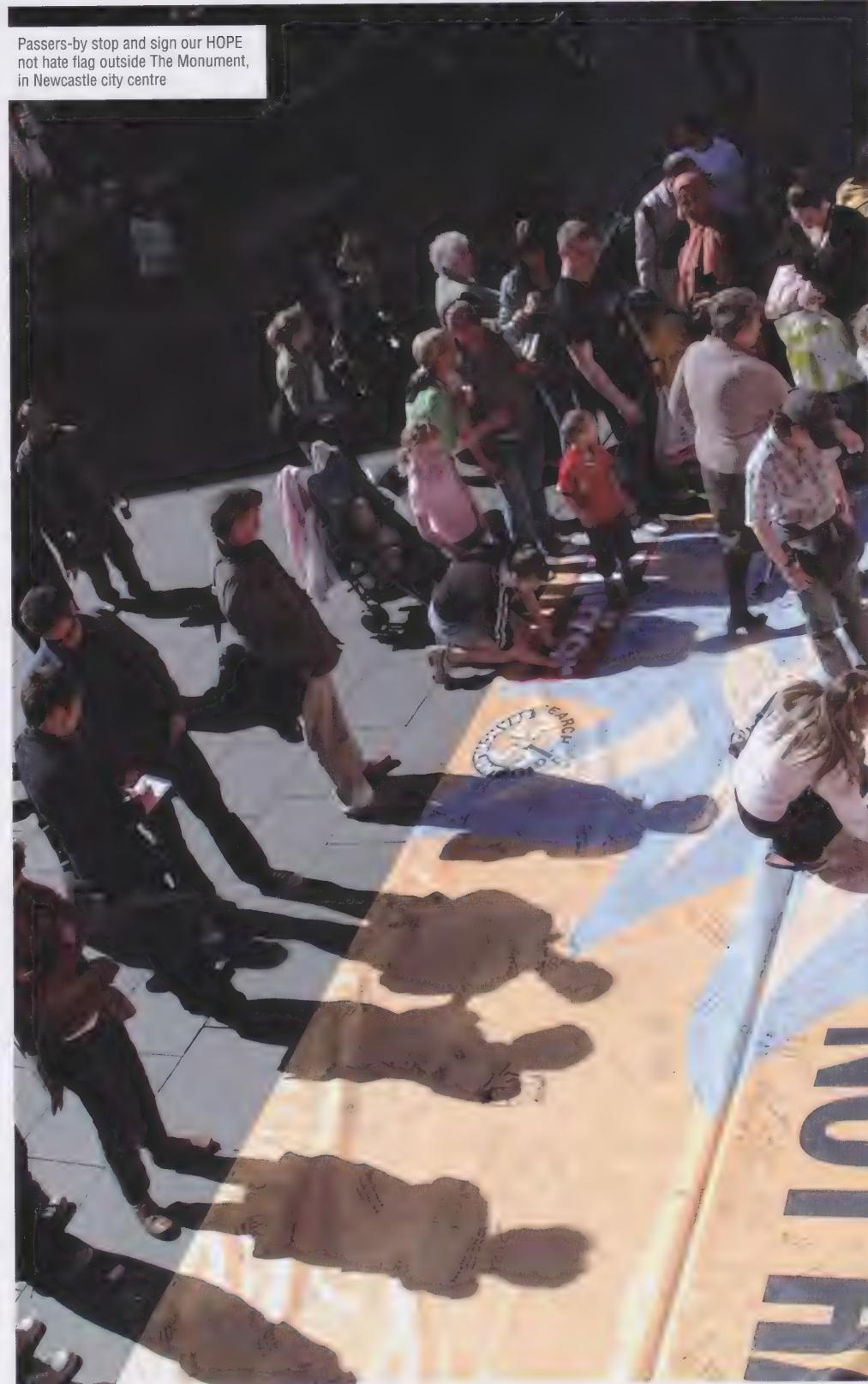
Today, we are on the brink of new challenges, more expansion and further change. One of the exciting projects we're about to undertake is an extensive community organising programme, empowering and training local people in 10 communities across England and Wales. These organisers will help their communities build resilience to deal with the tensions that arise from joblessness, insecurity, division, and differing cultural identities. Communities at risk need a sense of confidence that they can organise to solve their own problems, without resorting to populist prejudice or parties.

Likewise, we'll need to alter the language of our organisation. We will continue to research and challenge hate groups and violent extremists, but we will do so in a slightly different way from before. We intend to be less "anti" and more "for". In my view, and those of many of our supporters, HOPE not hate should stand for the basic values of tolerance, freedom, democracy, fairness, decency and equality. We should be about uniting people around what we have in common, rather than highlighting the differences between us.

The vast majority of people simply want to get on. Those who voted for the BNP were not bad people, they were angry. They felt ignored and left behind by the empty promises of politicians. They turned that anger on those with a different colour skin or religion because they were the easy targets. Today, we won't go into a community shouting

### TOGETHER

HOPE not hate is launching a TOGETHER project with seven organisers recruited to work in key areas of the country. They will be doing the sustained work of bringing communities together and finding positive and non-confrontational ways of people solving their problems in ways our traditional electioneering was unable to do. By working intensely in local communities, we can overcome fear and division through HOPE and action.



"fascist" the moment there is tension. We believe – and want others to understand this belief – that most people are *decent*; most people simply want to get along, live in peace and provide for their families. That is the "hope" we are fighting for.

We feel this more values-based approach will help us meet the new challenges we'll undoubtedly face over the coming years. Our supporters will have seen that we've become more outspoken against Islamist extremism,

for example. We've done so tentatively and somewhat nervously, slightly unsure of where the 'red lines' of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and ideas start and finish, or where conservative religious beliefs can meet (and sometimes become) prejudice and intolerance (even hatred). We are meeting this challenge as we do with all challenges: learning and moving forwards with greater confidence. We will judge every form of extremism against



our core values of hope and tolerance. This will help us remain consistent and, I hope, make it easier for us to explain our approach to the general public.

It is also quite clear that religion is emerging as the "new politics". Many of the extremes we'll be confronting will have a religious as well as political dimension. The horrific and murderous actions of ISIS (now calling itself the Islamic Caliphate) in Iraq and Syria should compel us to redouble our efforts

## Countering Islamist extremism

EVERYONE WILL rightly condemn the murderous actions of ISIS but we must also counter the theocratic and intolerant Islamist extremist ideology behind it that is as opposed to our values as fascism.

We need to bring communities together against Islamist extremism whether against the ISIS supporters of Anjem Choudary's various organisations or hate preachers who, while not necessarily advocating violence, provide ideological justification for intolerance, subjugation and inequality.

We will seek to counter Islamist extremism more actively by seeking alliances with mainstream Muslim organisations and individuals. By refusing to act, we are abandoning the very people being targeted by the extremists.

against its supporters in the West, as well as the extreme political and religious ideology that lies behind it (just as we've done with far right groups and individuals). This ideology – of ethnic and religious cleansing and intolerance – is as much a threat to 'hope' as any BNP or fascist organisation, with Muslims often its first victims.

Likewise, the intolerance of the Christian Right, whether pursuing an anti-gay agenda across Africa or whipping up Islamophobia in Europe and North America with its counter-jihad narrative, will also increasingly be in our crosshairs. That's why we're already working closely with many mainstream members of both faiths and others, to counter the poisonous narratives from the extreme ends of faith.

And we need to face these threats with the same determination and confidence with which we've faced off the BNP and other far-right groups: Britain First, the English Defence League, the National Front, and so forth – the list is long and far-right haters have learned to fear us as a result of our success. Going forwards, we need to be consistent with our ideas and actions, consistent with our values, and consistent in opposing hate wherever we meet it and from wherever it originates.

Of course we might need to differentiate between religious conservatives, whose views we might find unpleasant, and those who preach outright hatred, division and violence. There will always be 'grey' areas but we will shine a light on individuals, groups and ideologies which breach the values of HOPE – tolerance, equality, freedom and fairness – and fight hard to bring about positive change.

When we started this journey we made a conscious effort to break from the image and terminology of traditional anti-fascism. We wanted to work in local communities rather than hold town centre protests and rallies. We dropped

the hysterical "Nazi" headlines in our campaign literature and attempted to address issues of concern to local people. And we conveyed a softer, more positive message.

We should remember that the vast majority of those who voted for the BNP are not bad or evil people but simply angry. They are reacting to a sense of abandonment: from mainstream politicians and parties and, sometimes, from society at large. Whatever natural prejudice exists in that society is also fanned by economic pessimism: that sense of being 'left behind' or suffering an identity crisis. So if we are to break the hold of extremist groups, from whatever ideology or faith, then we need to focus on breaking this cycle, too.

All this means some soul-searching for those of us who believe in a fairer, more equal world. It is easy to blame others for the rise of extremist groups – from our right-wing politicians to foreign and domestic policies – but let's also reflect on our own shortcomings. What role have *we* played in leaving the vacuum into which the extremists have stepped? Why is *our* language and message not being heard? Have we even been *talking* to people and taking their issues and concerns seriously?

That's why you're going to hear a lot more "hope" from us.

As I said, we will continue to expose, undermine and destabilise extremist groups. But we will work as hard to heal divisions within divided communities, bring people together and foster dialogue (and hopefully mutual understanding), so that ultimately communities can find common solutions to problems they *all* face. That's the only way, I think, to build a better tomorrow.

If our last 10 years has been shaped around defeating hate, the next 10 should be about promoting HOPE – and I would love you to be with us on this journey.



# Red Lines: antisemitism

By Sam King

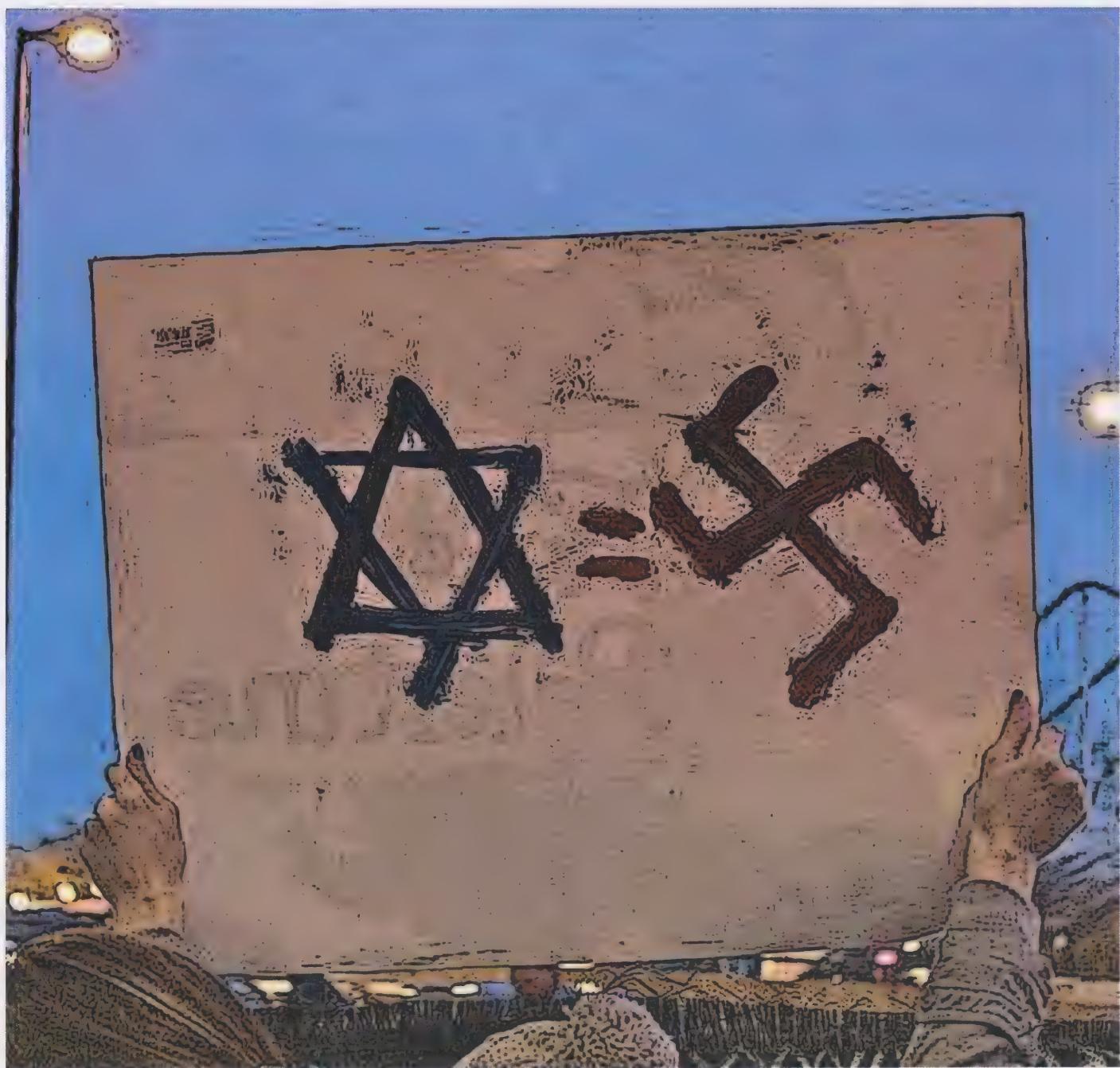
**WHAT WE SAY, how we say it and what we do is important, both as anti-racists and as anti-fascists.**

This summer many of us have watched in horror at international events, from the beheading of James Foley, to the persecution of the Yazidis, the continuing civil war in Syria and the

ongoing violence between the Israeli Government and Hamas, amongst other atrocities. In each instance, innocent people have been caught in the violence and due to the spread of social media and 24-hour news coverage we have all become witness to events, which challenge our very perception of the

world and of humanity.

There are many forums to discuss all of these issues and HOPE not hate isn't typically one of them as our focus is on the UK and building a society which embraces diversity whilst challenging hate. This is why we have felt obliged to write this article.





We are sure that you will agree that as anti-racists and anti-fascists we have an obligation to stand up to hatred and intolerance. In recent years, HOPE not hate has stood with you, united against all forms of anti-Muslim hate, homophobia, sexism, racial discrimination, sexism and disability discrimination. However in recent weeks one of the oldest forms of discrimination – antisemitism – has resurfaced both across Europe and in the UK in a way that should concern us all.

There have been numerous stories in the national media about the rise in antisemitism during the recent cycle of violence in Gaza. From firebombs to death threats, the targeting of synagogues and stone throwing to simply antisemitic abuse on social media forums across the Internet: over 240 incidents of antisemitic hate were reported in July alone, making it the second highest month on record. Whilst we abhor any form of hate and abuse, we are especially concerned about where this antisemitism is coming from and what the rhetoric is leading to.

### Rhetoric does matter

Given the news images day after day from Gaza, it isn't surprising that many of us became increasingly concerned about events in the Middle East and felt impotent as events unfolded. However, within hours, people began to confuse the actions of the Israeli Government and their criticism of those actions with the British Jewish community. For some the use of Zionist and Jew were interchangeable, boycotts of Jewish businesses were promoted, #HitlerwasRight trended on Twitter and every traditional antisemitic trope resurfaced with the word Jew replaced with Zionist.

What has made us so uncomfortable is who was saying this; it wasn't the far-right, but rather a mix of well meaning anti-racists who we believe would be horrified if they realised the impact of their actions, members of the far-left and people from within other faith communities, who have previously

stood united with the British Jewish community against hate and extremism. Of course, members of the far right also joined in for good measure!

### Red Lines

This isn't an article we thought we would have to write, but recent events have given us no choice. HOPE not hate stands against hatred and extremism and we're proud of our relationships with the Jewish community, so to make it clear, what follows are examples of antisemitism, not anti-Israel rhetoric, and are leading to an atmosphere of fear and intimidation for the British Jewish community.

Attacking British Jews for being Jewish is quite simply unacceptable and HOPE not hate commits to working with all community groups to continue to defeat and expose racism of all forms. We Are The Many isn't just a catchphrase, it's a campaign about the nature of British society and a core value of the HOPE not hate campaign.

### ■ On Israel and the diaspora –

British Jews hold a range of varying positions on the actions of the government of the state of Israel, but they have no vote and little influence. They cannot and should not be held responsible for the actions of the Israeli Government. Nor should they be forced to denounce the Israeli Government or give an opinion on the right of the state of Israel to exist – Good Jews versus Bad Jews isn't an acceptable line...

### ■ The creation of the State of Israel –

Statements that the Rothschilds (or any other Jewish family) bought the land and bribed countries to create a home for the Jews, ignoring the role of the UN, suggests a global network of Jewish power and influence. That's total nonsense.

**■ The Elders** – any reference to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (the notorious Russian forgery) is naked antisemitism. There is no such thing as a secret Jewish cabal controlling the world.

**■ The media and the Jews** – The British Jewish community doesn't control the media, including the BBC. There is no secret society exerting influence (whatever Nick Griffin would have you believe!).

**■ The Jewish Lobby** – Exactly as above. There may be Jewish communal bodies which make representations on behalf of the British Jewish community, but these aren't unique, there are also similar Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Catholic and Christian bodies...

**■ Bloodthirsty Israelis** – Any reference to Israelis and blood reminds many of the vicious antisemitic tales of Jews killing children for their blood, an evil lie from the Middle Ages that continues to do the rounds.

**■ Boycotts** – There will obviously be a vigorous and intense debate about boycott of Israeli goods, services and culture in the coming months and whatever your views on the issue, we ask you to debate with care. Understandably given recent history, Jews feel particularly vulnerable with debates about boycott, an extreme example of which we saw with the removal of all *kosher* goods from Sainsbury's in Holborn last month. Can you imagine the reaction if this had been any other form of ethnic specific food?

### ■ World War 2 comparisons –

Whatever your views of events in the Middle East, Israel is *not* Nazi Germany. The comparison is quite frankly insulting and undermines the uniquely atrocious actions of the Nazis. You can easily criticise the actions of the State of Israel without making crass, lazy, inaccurate and quite frankly deeply offensive comparisons.

We're not asking you not to criticise the State of the Israel. We're just saying that there are red lines which cannot and should not be crossed by anti-racists, anti-fascists or any group which claims to stand united against the politics of hate.

# PURPLE RAIN

## PUTTING UKIP UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

# UKIP link up with European extremists

**Simon Cressy** reports on a nervy few weeks in June for UKIP

NIGEL FARAGE and UKIP spent a nervy few weeks in June attempting to form a political group within the European Parliament following their successful election campaign the month before.

A number of UKIP's political allies abandoned the Eurosceptic party just days after its triumph in May, leaving Farage high and dry and in danger of not being able to satisfy European Union rules that require an official parliamentary group to have at least 25 MEPs from seven or more EU member states.

The Finns Party, previously known as the True Finns, and the Danish People's Party ditched the UKIP-led Europe for Freedom and Democracy group in favour of David Cameron's European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group.

Also walking away from UKIP was the Italian far right Lega Nord which joined an alliance with Marine Le Pen's Front National and the Dutch Islamophobe Geert Wilders.

Farage quickly began to court Beppe Grillo, the Italian comedian turned

politician, who is head of Italy's anti-euro Five Star Movement. Grillo's 17 MEPs soon linked up with their UKIP counterparts and by mid-June a new EU group was successfully formed with additional MEPs from Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic.

Changing the group name from the EFD to the longer title of "Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy" (EFDD), Farage also welcomed into the fold MEPs from Sweden and France, all of whom have less than sparkling political credentials.

Joelle Bergeron was elected to the EU in May as a member of Le Pen's Front National but resigned from the far right party shortly after, claiming that "their philosophy is no longer mine".

Nigel Farage was obviously convinced by Bergeron's Damascene conversion and recruited her into the ranks of his new European group, rewarding the French MEP by appointing her as EFDD representative on the European Parliament's influential Legal Affairs Committee.

Perhaps more controversial was the enlistment of two Swedish MEPs, Kristina Winberg and Peter Lundgren, from the far right Sweden Democrats.

Despite Farage describing the Swedes as "very decent working-class people" and "Swedish patriots", the party they represent is up to its neck in extremist politics.

The Sweden Democrats party was founded in 1988 as a descendant of the Sweden Party which, in turn, was formed in 1986 by the merger of the racist Bevara Sverige Svenskt (Keep Sweden Swedish) organisation and a splinter of the deeply xenophobic Progress Party.

The origins of the Sweden Democrats can be followed all the way back to the early days of Swedish fascism, with the party forming an integral part of the white supremacist movement in Scandinavia.

An early party chairman, Anders Klarström, was active with the Nazi Nordiska Rikspartiet (Nordic Reich Party) while the party's first auditor Gustaf Ekström was a Waffen-SS veteran who had served in the 5th

SS-Panzer-Division "Wiking". Ekstrom had also been a member of the national socialist Svensk Socialistisk Samling in the 1940s.

In 1992, the Sweden Democrats formed a youth group, the Sweden Democratic Youth (SDU). The first chairman of the fledgling SDU was Robert Vesterlund, nowadays more commonly known as the

leading figure in the network behind the nazi homepage Info-14. During the 1990s, the SDU became a breeding ground for young nazis with several of its members taking senior positions in a variety of different nazi organisations.

The Sweden Democrats attempted to forge international links with the German far right NPD, along with the National Association for the Advancement of White People, founded by the former Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, David Duke.

As a result of numerous embarrassing photographs of members at party meetings reaching the Swedish media, the Sweden Democrats

banned its members from wearing Nazi uniforms in 1996 in an attempt to clean up the party image.

Nevertheless, the party became increasingly influenced by European far right parties such as the Austrian FPÖ, the Danish People's Party and the Italian National Alliance.

However, the one party that truly inspired them was Jean Marie Le Pen's Front National (FN), with the latter giving the Sweden Democrats economic support for their 1998 election campaign. The FN enabled the Sweden Democrats to print and distribute 200,000 copies of a 24-page election booklet that was distributed to Swedish households. In return, the Sweden Democrats joined Euronat, an abortive FN initiative that had hoped to bring a number of European far right parties together in a loose coalition.

The FN was not the only member of the far right fraternity to sponsor the Sweden Democrats at election time. In 2004, Belgian Holocaust denier Bernard Mengal also gave financial assistance the SD's European election campaign.

In 2003, the party was hit by a series of regional scandals. In the southern Swedish municipality of Kristinehamn, SD Councillor Göran Hagberg was forced to quit the party after sending revisionist letters to the Ministry of Culture. Another SD councillor, Björn Lennartsson from the resort town of Askersund was caught shouting racist statements live on air on a local radio station.

Jimmie Åkesson became party leader in 2005 and attempted to persuade the Swedish public he was steering the good ship SD towards moderation and respectability. However, former leading SD member Daniel Assai – who has since turned against the party – claimed that the reforms were counterfeit. "There are two groups in the party," he said. "One is ideologically racist, from the old days. The second group is more interested in power, money and publicity. But the majority, I'm sorry to tell you, are still racist."

"The nazi members are allowed to express themselves openly behind closed doors," he said. "It's only when they talk in the media or in cyberspace that they get rid of them. But inside it's a different story."

Åkesson's party has many critics. Lena Posner, president of the Council of Jewish Communities in Sweden has said of the SD: "This is a neo-Nazi party, articulate, and talented but

very dangerous. We know where these people are coming from. They are Nazi sympathizers who, under their jackets, are still wearing their brown shirts."

Despite Åkesson's attempts at sanitising the party, the scandals refuse to go away.

In 2012, video footage was released by Swedish newspaper *Expressen* showing Sweden Democrat MPs Kent Ekeroth and Erik Almqvist, along with Stockholm SD city councillor Christian Westling, arming themselves with iron bars after fighting with a drunken bystander. Ekeroth was also filmed calling a woman a whore and going on to physically assault her.

Almqvist was also caught on camera using racist and sexist remarks and was forced to quit as an MP along with his position as the party's economic policy spokesman. Ekeroth refused to resign, instead taking a sabbatical from the Swedish parliament.

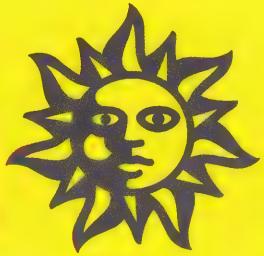
Just a fortnight later, another SD MP made headlines for the wrong reasons. Lars Isovaa reported being robbed of his backpack and pushed out of his wheelchair by "two unknown men of an immigrant background" whilst trying to get into the Riksdag (Swedish parliament). The Sweden Democrats defended Isovaa but had a change of heart when it was revealed that he had left his bag at a restaurant, and that the two men had helped him when he fell out of his wheelchair. He also went on to resign his position as an MP.

Nigel Farage told the media that he was proud to form his new group along with the Sweden Democrats MEPs. What is not as clear is whether UKIP and its leader are as proud of the Sweden Democrats far right past.



(left) Jimmie Åkesson and Kent Ekeroth  
Photos: *Expo*

# HOPE camp



By Elisabeth Pop and Owen Jones

LAST MONTH, 20 people spent six days in Thurrock, Essex, on our first HOPE camp, a six-day organising course.

During an intensive week, in which they immersed themselves in the theory of community organising every morning, the participants then spent at least five hours each day canvassing across the wards of West Thurrock and South Stifford, Grays Riverside, Chafford Hundred and Little Thurrock.

The Camp led by Carlos Saavedra, the former National Coordinator of United We Dream and the founder and lead trainer of the Movement Mastery Institute.

The HOPERs, as we called the 20 participants, knocked on 1,500 doors and got almost 300 people committed to pledge their support for the Thurrock TOGETHER community group.

Despite the fact that a dog bit one participant and some

were confronted by hostile attitudes on the doorstep, with one participant racially abused for being an immigrant, all the HOPERs realised the importance of community organising.

Thurrock was chosen because it is a microcosm of national problems, a community that is struggling with the impact of a decline in manufacturing employment coupled with significant demographic change.

In 2008, the British National Party averaged vote 16% across the entire borough while in the most recent round of local elections, in June, the UK Independence Party received a higher share of the vote than any other party.

We stressed the need to engage the disenfranchised white working class communities who have been forgotten and to attempt to form alliances with their black and migrant neighbours around local issues they *all* care about.

Only by starting a dialogue in a safe space and in a positive manner can communities break down the divisions that separate them and build resistance to the right-wing extremist hatemongers.

Five of the participants were given jobs with HOPE not hate to work as local organisers in some of the most challenging and divided communities across England and Wales. They will be working on a new project – TOGETHER – which seeks to provide an alternative to fear and hate at grassroots level.

The outcome of this project will be, we hope, to create more relaxed, stronger, and friendlier neighbourhoods where relations between different social, ethnic and generational groups are fluid and open.

It will seek to do some of the longer-term work aimed at bringing communities together that we were unable to do during our effort to end the rise of the BNP.

The HOPERs who attended the six-day Organising Boot camp



# Reflections on HOPE Camp

## HOPER: ROSIE CARTER

I feel incredibly privileged to have taken part in HOPE not hate's Boot Camp, an intense week immersed in shared visions and shared motivations to challenge racism and extremism in the UK with positivity. Through inspirational training, I've gained innovative tools to lay the foundations for community cohesion, and strategies to tackle both animosity towards others, and ambivalence for change. Moreover, the course reinvigorated my own belief in the power of hopefulness and the force of unassuming human kindness in challenging dangerous opinions that arise in difficult circumstances.



## HOPER: NICK SPOONER

Concentrating on the power of the narrative when communicating with teammates, as well as its capability in galvanising others around a common cause, is such a fantastic way to connect with people who don't necessarily come from the same background as you. Canvassing was, at times, challenging but, bar from being chased by a dog, was always highly motivating and the perfect way to take what we had learnt in the classroom and put it to practice on the street. Take all this and add both the wonderful people and the generosity and organisational skills of HOPE not hate and the result is a course that I feel very privileged to have attended.



## HOPER: DANIEL TINKLER

Despite having joined HOPE not hate on canvassing sessions or helping with student events in the past, I had initial worries about the HOPE Camp: what if it wasn't for me, what if I came across some really angry people? Instead I found myself going on a weeklong intensive journey, learning how to build strong teams and ultimately how to help disjointed and disenchanted communities stand up for themselves and move away from an extremist way of thinking.

Being on the doorstep was phenomenal – both seeing the majority of people react so positively to a message of HOPE, but, at the same time, worryingly realising that legitimate community concerns had not been listened to for years. I'm looking forward to putting what I've learned into action by helping HOPE not hate in a voluntary capacity.



## HOPER: VICTORIA PERRY

After polishing my boots and putting aside my apprehension, I took a six and a half hour train journey, from the North to attend the TOGETHER campaign Boot Camp in Essex. And believe you me it was a Boot Camp!

We were stretched to our limits and our endurance tested. We shared our stories, and much more than that we shared a sense of HOPE for Britain. This hope transpired into the teams we formed and allowed our shared vision to become a passionate mission that kept us motivated in our ongoing quest of spreading the message of HOPE not hate!

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# Fester still, the hatred that killed ... three years on

By Tor Bach, editor of *vepsen*

ON 22 JULY 2011, I was in the mountains with colleagues, fishing. We took a ferry across a large mountain lake to the cabin we were staying at. The skipper of the ferry remarked that some of my colleagues had "more tan" than he did. Going on, his suggestions for solving the world's problems proved to be, after some discussion, to drop atomic bombs on Afghanistan and Iraq so "we could get rid of the shit".

I work with people who have heard this kind of drivel before and have learned to handle situations like this with dignity, keeping their humiliation and anger inside themselves, knowing that being provoked is to lose.

The cabin was welcoming. Soon some of us fished for trout while others started to prepare the evening meal. Then the phones started, scared young people in Oslo telling us that a bomb that had exploded at the government buildings. People, we were told, were dead.

We despaired. It must be al-Qaeda. More calls: "They have shot at the Labour (AUF) youth camp at Utøya." Utøya? Why would Al-Qaeda attack there? It's not like them.

People got desperate, wondering if their loved ones in Oslo were safe and sound. Some of us knew young people going to Utøya and we observed that Norway would never be the same. Perversely enough, we were relieved when we heard that the perpetrator was Norwegian.

At least, we would not be going back to a city where Muslims are under siege.

On the way home, we stopped at Geilo, to buy newspapers and read about the child killer's rampage. It was a long detour. The roads around Utøya were closed and, late evening, we arrived in an Oslo guarded by soldiers, an Oslo where people spoke in hushed voices, where people no longer smiled and where insecurity prevailed. Did Anders Behring Breivik, the perpetrator, have accomplices?

2011 was a strange summer. In Oslo, people spoke in a soft, gentle way I have never seen before. We attended demonstrations to mourn Breivik's victims with roses in hand and began to discuss the tone of the public debate before Breivik's terror trial.

Half a year soon passed. Norway pondered the perpetrator's psyche. Was he healthy or was he too crazy to be tried and judged? Among those who shared the perpetrator's world view, the conclusion was clear: he was crazy, he was evil, and, above all, he had nothing to do with them.

In the summer of 2012, Breivik, found mentally sane and finally convicted, the country no longer discussed the public political climate but was more concerned with finding scapegoats. Norwegian net haters, the mini-Breiviks, emerged and found a new target for their hatred and blame: Eskil

Pedersen, head of the AUF.

A young man with no military experience, he was told that it was he who had failed. He should, supposedly, have defied police orders to evacuate and put himself at the head of resistance to the heavily armed Breivik. Facebook and other social media were inundated with venom against Pedersen, and the labour movement, as never before.

Perhaps the most dirty and ugly attack from a Norwegian politician came from Conservative MP Andre Oktay Dahl. According to him, the terror would never have hit Norway if his party boss, Erna Solberg, had been prime minister, due to her exceptional leadership skills. Solberg herself remained silent, choosing to collect poll points from Dahl's cowardly attack.

The truth is that the terrorist might not have struck if Solberg had been prime minister but that it was not due to her fabulous leadership. Breivik's onslaught was, in fact, directed at the labour movement, not at the Conservatives.

There were no troll comments that described Conservative youth as "vermin" and no one expressed regret that former Conservative PM Kåre Willoch survived an attack.

However, there were forces in Norway who wrote with facility about the "vermin on Utøya", who complained in vulgar terms that former Labour PM Gro Harlem

Brundtland was not present and killed there.

There were people who moaned in newspaper comment columns that police had confiscated their firearms just because they had written that they wanted to shoot then premier Jens Stoltenberg, and there were people on the extreme right-wing who fantasised about shooting Labour leader Jonas Gahr Støre with a Glock pistol.

Had Erna Solberg had the wonderful leadership skills that her followers boast, she would have put her foot down on some of her government partner, the Progress Party's, wild statements.

Currently, the terrorist Breivik is in jail. And he will stay there. At times he sends out letters to a variety of people, including the editor of the anti-fascist *vepsen* website, fretting about his terrible prison conditions and bragging of his role as a political leader.

Just the megalomania of a petty child murderer? Maybe. We choose not to give his writings any attention. But, on the web, there are people who extol the terrorist, who set up websites in his honour. On Facebook, Norwegians write things like this: "ABB [Breivik] did actually, through his deed, destroy the fortress of Utøya, which housed terrorist propaganda and hatred against Jews of unimagined dimensions. Furthermore, ABB removed Jens Stoltenberg from his stool ... to add to this, enlightened ABB large



parts of the Norwegian people about the facts, the undersigned included. Little did I know about Labour and AUF's hatred against Jews and the indoctrination processes at Utøya. Now we all know what happened out there on Extreme Island. ABB has also successfully paralysed the high treasonous Labour. This is the facit (sic) and you can say what you want about this."

This quote emanates from a former head of the racist Norwegian Defence League, and fourteen sad individuals, including central activists within the anti-Muslim scene, pressed the "Like" button.

The idea of "treasonous" Labour has lived in Norway ever since the late Nazi puppet Vidkun Quisling stood

up in Parliament in the 1930s and claimed that the Labour Party was bought and paid for by Moscow and was planning a communist revolution in Norway. It is a hatred that was further nurtured through the rightist Libertas campaign against Gro Harlem Brundtland with car stickers that urged "Get rid of her" and it is a hatred and a form of conspiracy thinking kept alive by MPs who today again accuse the labour movement of treason or being "cultural Quislings".

The website misnamed Document continues unabated in the same or, perhaps, even more rabid style. The use of rainbow flags in Oslo's trams and buses during Europride is held up as a possible threat and even Libe

Rieber-Mohn, one of Labour's most anti-immigration advocates, is blamed. The Devil is painted on the wall with a text in a broad pen: "First gay flags, then Palestinian flags, then Hamas flags and then.... Yes, what then? Attacks on people with yarmulkes, or visible crosses. A general insecurity, women should wear the hijab."

Last summer, unknown persons slapped up posters urging us to listen to the incarcerated mass murderer and read his manifesto. The police were never able to find the culprits.

Three years after Utøya, three years after the bomb devastated the government quarter, we know that the mass murderer's attitudes are alive and well.

As long as there are people like the ferry skipper on a remote lake in the Norwegian mountains, people that without shame advocate mass murder, there will be people who sooner or later are willing to commit mass murder.

While this political sewage seemingly flows more freely than before, we have a prime minister, Erna Solberg, no less, who thinks we have already *had* the debate about the terrorist's attitudes.

It is time to explain to her that she is wrong; it is time that we really spell it out loud. We have a duty to the 77 dead, a duty towards the bereaved, not to mention a duty to our society, to state clearly what humanistic core values we will build our future on.

# More trials and tribulations for Spanish nazis

From Sandra Cortés in Madrid for Antifeixistes.org

POLITICAL PARTIES and NGOs in València have denounced irregularities in the recent trial of eighteen nazis belonging to the Anti-System Front (FAS) in the city after all the accused walked free.

The court acquitted all eighteen of crimes that included illegal possession and trafficking of weapons, conspiracy and hate crimes, after throwing out evidence from permitted wiretapping.

The police investigation began ten years ago with the interception of multiple phone calls, after discovering that the FAS was financed by selling arms sales online. For a year, the Guardia Civil investigated the FAS, uncovering a dangerous organisation prone to violence and in possession of an arsenal.

Suspecting leaks from a police officer linked to the nazis, the Guardia Civil decided to act and obtained warrants to raid the homes of 24 people and an FAS premise, called "The Thule Centre".

Among the weapons seized in the swoop were a grenade launcher and numerous firearms, some from the Spanish Army. All of the weapons were destroyed weeks before the trial in what the legal authorities term a "miscarriage of justice."

Three of the nazi defendants were from the military, another the son of a police chief. Others include Alejandro Serrador, a councillor for the fascist party España2000 in Silla, and Pedro Cuevas, the murderer of the young anti-fascist Guillem Agulló, who was killed in 1993 and whose assassin was only given four years in prison. The accused had allegedly been preparing attacks on immigrants and anti-fascists but was



Pedro José Cuevas Silvestre, one of the 18 nazis from the FAS gang and assassin of anti-fascist Guillem Agulló in 1993

Photo: Popular Action Against Impunity

disbanded by the Guardia Civil before they were able to commit any attacks.

Eight organisations were co-prosecutors. The Spanish judicial system allows organisations to be part of a trial if they have a genuine legal interest in doing so. In this case, three left parties (United Left, Compromís and Catalan Republican Left), two cultural organisations (ACPV and Ca Revolta) and three NGOs (Spanish Refugee Aid Commission, Movement Against Intolerance and SOS Racism) exercised this legal right. During the trial, friends of the accused nazis issued death threats to the co-prosecutors' lawyer who was only able to attend court with a police escort.

Delivering his verdict, the judge said that hawking arms online is "normal" and that the police had no reason to tap the nazis' phones even though these wiretaps allowed the police to uncover the violent plans of the FAS by raiding the homes of the accused and finding manuals about manufacturing explosives, organisation charts and strategy documents on military training, tracking people and compiling lists of "enemies."

The co-prosecutors' lawyer

raised questions about the relationship between the accused and police officers because some of the wiretapped telephone conversations referred to aid received from the group members in the Guardia Civil and the police.

Other questions aimed at trying to establish who else was in contact with the FAS's leaders, such as Pedro Pablo Peña, the leader of the nazi National Alliance (AN), who was jailed for two years in 2000 for preparing an attack on a busload of relatives of imprisoned members of the Basque armed group ETA.

The NA was founded just a year after the FAS was disbanded and was officially launched in València. Taking part in the launch ceremony was one of the leaders of the FAS paramilitary group, Juan Manuel Soria, who is currently in Morocco.

The same judge, José Manuel Megía Carmona, who acquitted the eighteen accused nazis did the same in 2004 in the trial of the nazi Armageddon organisation, whose members were accused of arson attacks on the HQs of several political parties. In that case, Carmona also ruled intrusive wiretapping by the police inadmissible, thus

invalidating the cases relating to offences derived from the records.

The co-prosecutors in the latest trial announced in August that they would be lodging an appeal to the Supreme Court. They have also publicly exposed the fact that the compulsory video recording of the trial has mysteriously disappeared.

Democratic and social organisations in València have spent years denouncing the impunity for fascists that seemingly exists in the region. In 2008, all the left political parties, social and cultural organisations and NGOs created a joint platform under the name "Popular Action against Impunity" after more than 20 bombings between 2005 and 2008 remained unsolved by police.

Fascist groups have also attacked left-wing and Catalan cultural events without the police ever arresting anyone. Protests by Popular Action against Impunity have been brought before the Spanish Parliament in Madrid and the European Union.

Not everything has swung the nazis' way, however. In Barcelona, on 24 July 2014, a court sentenced 10 nazis, accused of brutally beating up a 16-year-old anti-fascist at the entrance to an anti-fascist concert in Manresa in 2012, to between 16 and 19 years in prison.

Some of the convicted nazi thugs belong to the Republican Social Movement, a close international ally of the British National Party. During the trial, the Catalan police arrested four other members of the same nazi gang, known as the Cusos – Espanyol football hooligans – for intimidating a citizen of Tarragona into contributing to the defence costs of the accused.

# Golden Dawn in jail, on trial and in the European Parliament

From Panayote Dimitras for Greek Helsinki Monitor in Athens

ON 30 JULY 2014, the two investigative Athens Appeals Court judges in charge of the judicial inquiry into the activities of the nazi Golden Dawn party – that may well amount to membership in and management of a criminal organization – formally concluded their work and sent the 30,000-page long case file to the Athens Appeals Court prosecutor.

The latter now has to file a detailed list of charges against the accused with the Athens Appeals Court Indictment Chamber that will then decide who, and for what, charges will be referred to trial before an Athens Three-Member Felony Appeals Court. If all runs smoothly, the trial could well start before the end of the year.

In all, 78 persons are accused, of whom 30 are remanded in custody. All 18 MPs elected for Golden Dawn in June 2012 are included in the list of accused. Nine of them, including GD leader Nikolaos Mihaloliakos, deputy leader Christos Pappas and spokesperson Elias Kasidiaris, are behind bars. Three more MPs, including Eleni Zaroulia, the leader's wife, are under house arrest, allowed to leave their homes only to attend parliamentary sessions.

Another five are free but with restrictive measures including a ban on leaving the country. Only one, who left the party during the judicial inquiry, is totally free although he, too, faces the same charges. It is noteworthy that another MP, who was expelled from the party when he denounced it during the inquiry, is among those being held.

The case against GD has been based on no fewer than sixty separate judicial case files – for crimes ranging from racist speech to murders – against persons the judges identified as GD members.

In a handful of those cases, trials have been held and sentences dished out, including a life sentence for two GD members, aged 25 and 29, for the murder, on 17 January 2013, of a 27-year old Pakistani migrant worker, handed down on 15 April 2014 by an Athens Mixed Jury Court.

Many more trials for separate crimes are coming up, in addition to the mega-trial for the operation of a criminal organisation with all or most of the 78 present defendants.

The problem with the mega-trial is that it is expected to last for several months. This means that many, if not most, of the GD leaders and members who are remanded in

custody will walk free before its conclusion, as, in Greece, one can only be remanded in custody up to 18 months.

The trial, in any case, has been denounced by GD as political and motivated by its almost continuous rise in election results and opinion polls.

During the judicial inquiry, a lot of information was published not only on violent crimes attributed to GD, but also on its neo-nazi character, which the accused naturally attempted to deny. However, police had found ample evidence, including compromising pictures, in the computers of GD leaders. Two are presented here, showing a mass oath taking by GD members and a nazi salute by GD's deputy leader Pappas and his very young son.

Towards the end of the judicial inquiry, on 4 July 2014, GD's leader and a few other remanded MPs were taken from the prison to the Appeals Court to provide additional defence statements to the two judges. A sizeable group of GD supporters gathered outside the court and had a violent clash with the police special anti-riot forces present to assure the court's security.

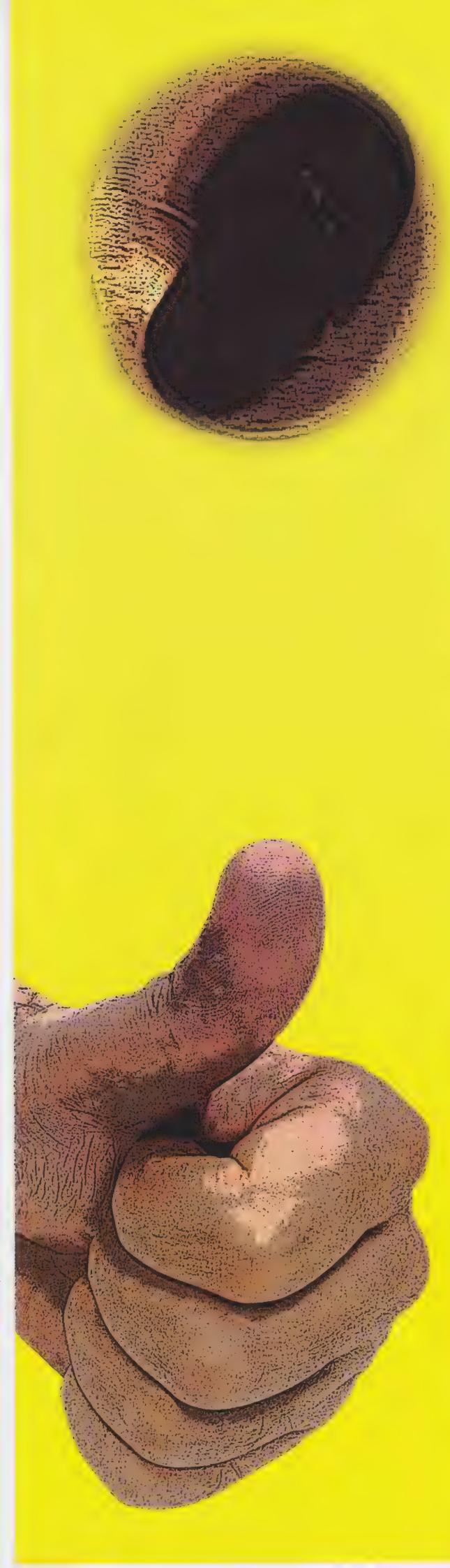
The police were not reported to have made any arrests; however, a video of the incident clearly showed the faces of some of the perpetrators of the violent attacks. In one frame, a person shown pulling down a police officer was subsequently identified as Alexandros Lyris, a proud "graduate" of a GD "training camp" in 2011 and a failed GD candidate in the 2014 European elections.

After his identification, police supposedly launched a search to arrest him but reportedly failed to locate him. This was "understandable" as, a few days later, it was revealed that Lyris had moved to Brussels as "an appointed assistant" to one of the three GD MEPs, Lambros Fountoulis.

How all this will ultimately affect GD is anybody's guess. It should be recalled that in the May 2014 EP elections, although in the midst of all these revelations, GD was the only party to increase its share of the votes and thus become the country's third party.

There is mounting fear that GD will now use the trial to further increase its popularity, especially as long as the other parties continue to instrumentalise GD against each other, rather than presenting a determined common front against GD, nazism, racism, xenophobia and antisemitism.





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# My brother the terrorist

When Robb Leech learned his stepbrother had joined an Islamic radical cult, it turned his world upside down, then led to two highly-acclaimed films



**M**y journey into the world of extremism began rather unexpectedly in the late summer of 2009. I had been looking forward to seeing my stepbrother, Richard, on a two week family holiday to Rhodes. He didn't come, and when I did see him, months later, I hardly recognised him.

A week before we left, Rich's mum (my stepmum) called to remind him to bring sunscreen (he had been burnt to a crisp the previous year in Cyprus). His reply caught her completely by surprise: he wouldn't need it, he said, because he had 'converted to Islam, a beautiful, beautiful religion'. He wouldn't be joining us on the sun-kissed sandy beaches of Lindos, that were full of half-naked (and in some cases fully naked) men and women, some of whom would be drunk, too. Yes, we thought it was all rather strange, to come out of the blue like it did: as far as we knew, Rich had been 'born again' as a Christian during the last few years. But he had only converted to Islam, so maybe it would be good for him. We went on holiday, I played lots of half-naked beach volleyball, and not a word more was said.

It was only after I arrived home that the true meaning and reality of my stepbrother's conversion revealed itself – in the form of a centre page spread, in a national newspaper. The article was about a man I had never heard of before – Anjem Choudary – head

of a group called al-Muhajiroun and apparently the country's most hated man. He believed in stoning women to death for adultery and called for the utter destruction of the western world, while at the same time claiming benefits from the state. So it was a surprise to see my stepbrother's name, Richard Dart, described as originating from a seaside town, Weymouth (our town), halfway down the page. He was apparently, it said, a fresh convert to Islam and this same Anjem Choudary's protégé. Perhaps more worryingly still, Rich was quoted as explaining how he was willing to fight, and if it came to it, die for Islam. He had converted only a matter of weeks previously.

Over the following weeks and months the family would experience the full extent of Rich's transformation. He changed his name to Salahuddin – a name chosen, pertinently, after the 13th century Muslim Sultan who drove Richard the Lionheart from Palestine during the Crusades – and would swamp us all with messages and emails warning of our collision course with Hellfire. It was mad and very hard to deal and come to terms with. Much of my family, particularly on Richard's side, felt like they had lost a son or a brother. It was as if 'Rich' was simply dead. We felt like grieving.

Nobody knew what to do, there was no one to ask for advice, no helplines or websites. I remember a mother of a radicalised young man once telling me

she wished her son was a heroin addict instead, because then at least she could call someone for advice, or not feel so ashamed to talk with a neighbour or close friend about how she was feeling. It's a very private suffering, and as a family you somehow feel responsible, or worse, expect other people to blame you for the way your brother or son 'turned out'.

I suppose as a stepbrother, I had a degree of detachment from the situation. I could explore what was happening to Rich without getting caught up in as much emotional turmoil as the rest of the family. They found Rich's radicalisation extremely difficult to deal with and just tried to get on with their lives as ordinarily as possible. I, however, wanted to try and understand Rich, and this new and crazy world he had become a part of. As a young filmmaker, documenting this process and telling my story, was actually a very natural and instinctive decision for me to make. Making a film was my way of making sense of what was happening; it provided me with a process from which to attack the problem.

And so I found myself, after a string of uneasy email correspondences, at Mile End tube station in the historic heart of London's East End, squinting at somebody walking towards me, who had only the slightest resemblance to my stepbrother.

Rich was wearing a long white robe, sandals and sported a surprisingly long

**“** Yes, charismatic ideologues like Anjem Choudary are out there, moulding vulnerable minds and helping to fill them with hatred of the West. And they should take responsibility for playing their part in the radicalisation process... but you know what, you have to be lost to be found. Maybe we too should take responsibility, as a society, for these people, like my stepbrother, who we're losing in the first place. **”**





gingerish beard (how he grew it so fast still bemuses me). His face resembled Rich: he had the same features, same hair colour and complexion, yet his eyes didn't belong to Rich. His words were alien and distant, almost as if from another time and place: "*You see all this filth, all this munkar [that which is evil], it will all be gone when the Sharia comes in,*" he said, scanning disdainfully around him. I didn't know exactly what he meant but I got the essence of it – all these people were dirty and needed to be removed.

I would spend the next year filming Rich and his new 'brothers' for BBC 3, in 'My Brother The Islamist' (which aired in 2011). A few years later, Rich would be arrested and plead guilty to terrorism charges, and I would later make a second film – 'My Brother The Terrorist' – which aired earlier this year.

During shooting for 'My Brother The Islamist' my relationship with Rich slowly improved, to the point where we could sit down and he wouldn't try to convert me. Ultimately, though, there was no coming back. In 2012 he had planned to fly to Pakistan and join the Taliban but was arrested with three others (including his wife) before he could do so. Rich wanted to fight for his oppressed brothers and sisters in Muslim lands, he claimed, whom he perceived as being victims of the evil 'West'. In other words, he wanted to fight Jihad, and he

didn't necessarily want to come back.

Now he's in prison serving a six-year sentence and when he finally does get out, he will spend the next five years on license. The future for Rich is uncertain – maybe prison will give him time to reflect, to simmer down, but it's also quite possible he will become more resentful and bitter.

Today, as I write this, the world is coming to terms with the death of an American journalist, at the hands of a British ISIS (Islamic State) executioner in Iraq. The man holding the knife speaks with a chillingly familiar accent – he sounds like he's from east or south London. I imagine him a few years before, maybe stood outside Whitechapel station, handing out anti-voting leaflets with the other 'brothers', before heading up the road to collect his Job Seekers Allowance.

I have met hundreds of these guys over the last few years, and you know what – most of them are really quite likeable. That's the strange thing. They're polite and charismatic, and like any other group of mates will crack jokes and have a laugh. But their demeanour can rapidly change, and many of them are more than ready to leave the comfortable, perhaps unexciting world of the capitalist West, to seek out adventure and purposefulness on foreign battlefields. Many of these guys convert to Islam in the search of a new identity, as a way of escaping a

world they feel they don't have a stake in. It gives them meaning and a purpose in life; it empowers them, makes them feel important.

Before it was all about the Jihad, but now it's about an Islamic Caliphate – and we're all terrified of it.

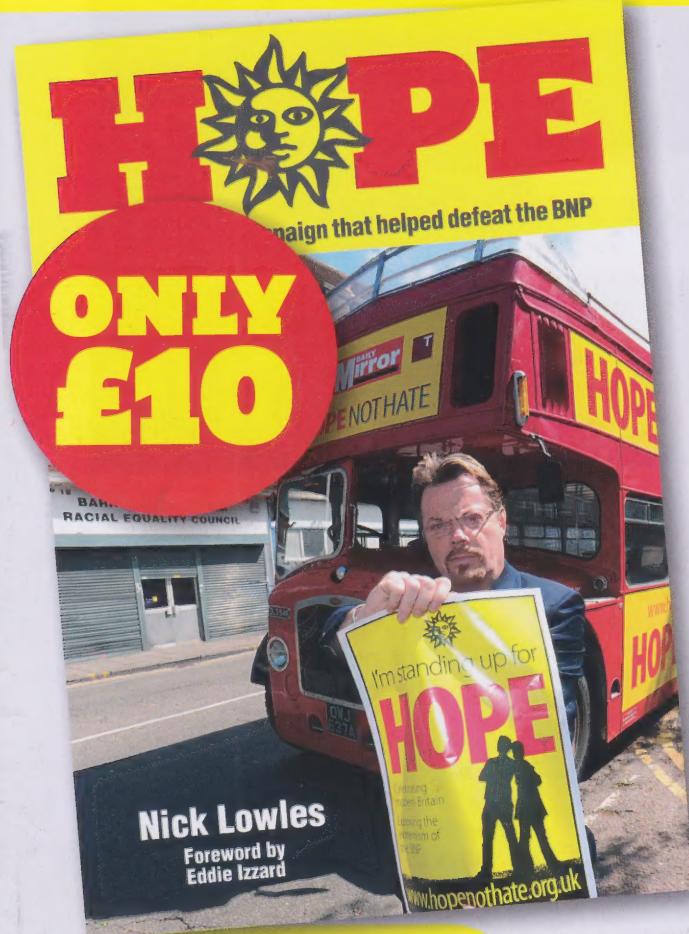
When I first looked for an answer as to why Rich became radicalised, back in 2009, I pointed the finger at Anjem Choudary: he is after all the man responsible for converting and shaping so many others' Islamist beliefs. A naive me five years ago envisaged a crazed cult leader brainwashing scores of young vulnerable men and from there on controlling their every move and breath.

But it's much more complicated and difficult than that. Yes, charismatic ideologues like Anjem Choudary are out there, moulding vulnerable minds and helping to fill them with hatred of the West. And they should take responsibility for playing their part in the radicalisation process ... but you know what, you have to be lost to be found. Maybe we too should take responsibility, as a society, for these people, like my stepbrother, who we're losing in the first place..

■ Robb Leech is a filmmaker, director of 'My Brother The Islamist' (BBC3 2011) and 'My Brother The Terrorist' (BBC3 2014) [www.robbleech.com](http://www.robbleech.com) | @RobbLeech



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